

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1379111



Theology Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

BT
1330
FSS
1820
v.2

CHECKS

TO

ANTINOMIANISM.

BY

THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

—•—
VOLUME II.

CONTAINING,

- | | |
|---|---|
| I. FIFTH CHECK—PART I. IN A LETTER TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ.—PART | II. THE FICTITIOUS AND GENUINE CREED. |
| II. REMARKS ON MR. BERRIDGE'S "CHRISTIAN WORLD UNMASKED." | III. AN EQUAL CHECK TO PHARISAISM AND ANTINOMIANISM—PART I. |

—•—
THIRD AMERICAN EDITION.

—•—
New-York:

**PUBLISHED BY J. SOULE AND T. MASON, FOR THE METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.**

—•—
Abraham Paul, Printer.

—◆—
1820.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.



I. FIFTH CHECK...PART FIRST.

	Page
I. An Answer to the "Finishing Stroke" of Mr. Richard Hill.....	5
II. Remarks on the Creed of an Antinomian.	
III. Appendix: On the remaining Difference between Calvinists and Anti-Calvinists, respecting Final Justification by Works.....	31

II. FIFTH CHECK...PART SECOND.

I. Sincere Obedience defended.....	43
II. The Evangelical Law of Liberty.....	46
III. The Conditionality of Perseverance.....	60

III. THE FICTITIOUS AND GENUINE CREED. 81

IV. AN EQUAL CHECK TO PHARISAISM AND ANTI-NOMIANISM....PART FIRST.

PREFACE: The Design of the Work, and the Reasons of its Publication..	109
I. An Historical Essay on the Importance and Harmony of the two Gospel Precepts BELIEVE and OBEY; and the fatal Consequences of parting them.....	113
II. A Discourse preached at Madeley, April 18, and May 9, 1773, on the two Covenants, that of Works and that of Grace; showing that Salvation is only by the latter.....	135
III. A Scriptural Essay, on the Rewardableness of the Works of true Faith, according to the Covenant of Grace.....	185
IV. An Essay on Truth: or a rational Vindication of the Doctrine of Salvation by Faith; displaying the Nature and Saving Power of religious Truth, when cordially embraced by Faith, and the vari- ous Sorts and Degrees thereof,—with Addresses to different De- scriptions of Persons.....	221

From the library of W. Edwin Drayton



LOGICA GENEVENSI

CONTINUED:

OR,

THE FIRST PART

OF

THE FIFTH CHECK

TO

ANTINOMIANISM.

CONTAINING

AN ANSWER TO

“THE FINISHING STROKE”

OF

RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

In which some Remarks upon Mr. FULSOME'S ANTINOMIAN CREED, published by the Rev. Mr. Berridge, are occasionally introduced.

WITH AN

APPENDIX,

Upon the remaining Difference between the Calvinists and the Anti-Calvinists, with respect to our Lord's Doctrine of *Justification by Words*, and St. James's Doctrine of *Justification by Works*, and not by Faith only.

As deceivers and yet true.—In meekness instructing them that oppose themselves.
2 Cor. vi. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 25.



CONTENTS.

SECT. I. Mr. Hill endeavours to screen his mistakes, by presenting the world with a wrong view of the controversy.

Sect. II. His charge, that the practical religion recommended in the Checks "undermine both Law and Gospel," is retorted: and the Mediator's Law of Liberty is defended.

Sect. III. Mr. Hill's faint attempt to show, that his scheme differs from speculative Antinomianism: His inconsistency in pleading for and against sin, is illustrated by Judah's behaviour to Tamar.

Sect. IV. At Mr. Hill's special request, Mr. Fulsome, [a gross Antinomian, first introduced to the world by Mr. Berridge,] is brought upon the stage of controversy. Mr. Berridge attempts in vain to bind him with Calvinistic cords.

Sect. V. Mr. Hill cannot defend his doctrines of grace before the judicious, by producing a list of the gross Antinomians that may be found in Mr. Wesley's societies.

Sect. VI. Mr. Hill, after passing over all the Arguments and Scriptures of the Fourth Check, attacks an illustration with the IXth Article. His stroke is warded off, and that Article turned against Calvinism.

Sect. VII. His moral creed about faith and works is incompatible with his immoral system.

Sect. VIII. He raises a cloud of dust about a fair, though abridged quotation from Dr. Owen; and in his eagerness to charge Mr. Wesley and his second with disingenuity, furnishes them with weapons against his own errors.

Sect. IX. The "execrable Swiss slander" proves sterling English truth.

Sect. X. The sincerity of our Lord's intercession, even for Judas, is defended.

Sect. XI. An answer to two capital charges of gross misrepresentation.

Sect. XII. Some queries concerning Mr. Hill's forwardness to accuse his opponents of disingenuity, gross perversion, calumny, forgery, &c. and concerning his abrupt manner of quitting the field of controversy.

Sect. XIII. A perpetual noise about gross perversions, and base forgeries, becomes Mr. Hill as little as any writer, considering his own inaccuracy with regard to quotations; some flagrant instances of which are produced out of his Finishing Stroke.

Sect. XIV. The author, after professing his brotherly love and respect for all pious Calvinists, apologizes for his antagonist before the Anti-Calvinists: and,

Sect. XV. Takes his friendly leave of Mr. Hill, after promising him to publish a sermon on Rom. xi. 5, 6, to recommend and Guard the doctrine of Free Grace in a scriptural manner.

In the APPENDIX, the author proves by ten more arguments, the absurdity of supposing with the Solifidians, that Believers are justified by works before MEN and ANGELS, but not before God.

AN
ANSWER
TO
THE FINISHING STROKE
OF
RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

Hon. and dear Sir,

I HAVE received your *Finishing Stroke*, and return the following Answer to you, or, if you have quitted the field, to your pious Second, the Rev. Mr. Berridge, who by a public attack upon *sincere obedience*, and upon the doctrine of a believer's *Justification by Works*, and not by Faith only, has already entered the lists in your place.

Sect. I. Page 6, You complain, that I represent you as fighting the battles of the rankest Antinomians, "*Because* (say you) we firmly believe and unanimously assert, that *the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*, and that, *if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*, &c. and that this advocacy prevails." Not so, Sir: I apprehend you give your readers totally wrong ideas of the question. You know, I never opposed you for saying, that *the blood of Christ cleanseth a penitent believer from ALL sin*. On the contrary, this I insist upon in a fuller sense than you do, who, if I mistake not, suppose that *death*, and not the blood of Christ, applied by the sanctifying Spirit, is to be our cleanser from *all sin*. The point which we debate is not then, whether Christ's blood cleanses from *all sin*, but whether it *actually* cleanses from *all guilt* an *impenitent backslider*, a *filthy apostate*; and whether God says to the fallen believer, that commits adultery and murder, "*Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee*:" This you affirm in your fourth Letter; and this I expose as the very quintessence of Ranterism, Antinomianism, and Calvinistic perseverance.

The second part of your mistake is yet more glaring than the first. The question is not [as you inform your readers] whether, if *any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, &c.* You know, Sir, that far from denying this comfortable truth, I maintain it in full opposition to your narrow system, which declares, that *if any man, who is passed by or non-elected, sinneth, there is no Advocate with the Father for HIM*: and that there are thousands of *absolutely* reprobated wretches, born to have the devil for a tempter and an accuser, without any help from our Redeemer and Advocate.

Nor yet do we debate whether Christ's advocacy *prevails*, in the full extent of the word, for all that *know the day of their visitation*. This is a point of doctrine, in which I am as clear as yourself. But the question, about which we divide is, 1. Whether Christ's advocacy never prevails, when he asks that barren fig-trees, which are at last cut down for persisting in their unfruitfulness, may be *spared this year also*? 2. Whether it prevails in such a manner for all those, who once made ever so weak an act of true faith, that they shall never *make shipwreck of the faith, never deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*? 3. Whether Aaron and Korah, David and Demas, Solomon and Hymeneus, Peter and Judas, Philetus and Francis Spira, with all that fall from God, shall *infallibly* sing louder in heaven for their grievous falls on earth?—In a word, whether the *salvation* of some, and the *damnation* of others, are so *finished*, that, during the *day of their visitation*, it is *absolutely* impossible for one of the former to draw back to perdition from a state of salvation; and for one of the latter to draw back to salvation from a state of perdition?

These important questions you should have laid before your readers as the very ground of our controversy. But instead of this you amuse them with two precious Scriptures, which I hold in a fuller sense than yourself. This is a stroke of your logic; but it is not the *finishing* one, for you say:

Sect. II. P. 6. "We cannot admit the contrary doctrine [that of the Checks] without at once undermining both *Law* and *Gospel*. For the *law* is certainly undermined by supposing, that any breach of it whatever, is not attended with the curse of God."—What law do I undermine? Is it the *law of innocence*? No. For I insist upon it as well as you, to convince unhumiliated sinners, that there can be no salvation but in and through a Mediator.—Is it the Mediator's law, the *law of liberty*? Certainly not: for I defend it against the bold attacks you make upon it; and shall now ward off the dreadful blow you give it in this argument.

O Sir, is it right to confound, as you do, the law of paradisiacal innocence, with the evangelical law of liberty, that in point of personal, sincere obedience, you may set both aside at one stroke? Is not this Calvinistic stroke as dangerous, as it is unscriptural? 'There is no law but one, which damns for want of absolute innocence: all those that are under *any* law, must be under *this* law, which curses for a wandering thought as well as for incest.—But believers are not cursed for a wandering thought. Therefore they are under *no* law: they are not cursed even for incest; they may break their "*rule of life*" by adultery as David, or by incest as the unchaste Corinthian, without falling under the curse of *any* divine law in force against them: in a word, without ceasing to be men after God's own heart.'

Now whence arises the fallacy of this argument? Is it not from overlooking the *Mediator's law*, the *law of Christ*? Can you see no medium between being under "*a rule of life*," the breaking of which shall *work for our good*; and being under a law that curses to the pit of hell for the least want of absolute innocence? Betwixt those two extremes, is there not the evangelical *law of liberty*?

O Sir, be not mistaken: the Gospel has its law. Hear St. Paul: *God shall JUDGE the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my GOSPEL*, Rom. ii. 16. Hear St. James; *So speak ye [believers] and so do, as they that shall be judged by the LAW OF LIBERTY; for he [the believer] shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy*, James ii. 12, 13. illustrated by Matt. xviii. 23—35.

Christ is neither an Eli nor a Nero, neither a dolt nor a tyrant; but a *priestly king*, a *Melchisedec*. If he is a *king*, he has a law; his subjects *may*, and the disobedient *shall*, be condemned by it. If he is a *priestly king*, he has a *gracious law*; and if he has a *gracious law*, he requires no *absolute impossibilities*. Thus the covenant of grace keeps a just medium between the relentless severity of the first covenant, and the Antinomian softness of the covenant trumpeted by some Calvinists.

Be not then frightened, O *Sion*, from meditating in Christ's law day and night; for it is the law of thy gracious *King*, who *cometh unto thee meek, and sitting upon the foal of a mild, pacific animal*: and not that of thy fierce and fond monarch, O *Geneva*, who comes riding upon the wings of storms and tempests, to damn the *reprobates* for the preordained, unavoidable consequences of Adam's preordained, unavoidable sin; and to encourage fallen believers, that climb up into their neighbours' beds, by saying to each of them, *Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee*. But more of this to Mr. Berridge. When you have given us a wrong idea of the Mediator's

law: you proceed to do the same by the Gospel, with which that law is so closely connected. For you say:

P. 6. "The Gospel is certainly undermined, by supposing, that there is provision made in it for some sins, and not for others." Well then, Sir, Christ and the four evangelists have "certainly undermined the Gospel;" for they all mention *the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the sin unto death, or the sin of final impenitency and unbelief*; and they not only *suppose*, but expressly declare, that it is a sin, for which "no provision is made," and the punishment of which obstinate unbelievers and apostates must personally bear. Is it not strange, that the capital doctrine, by which our Lord *guards* his own Gospel, should be represented as a capital error, by which "the Gospel is certainly undermined?"

Sect. III. P. 6. To show that your scheme is different from speculative Antinomianism, you ask, "Is the experience of David, Lot, and Solomon, that of all those who abide by those doctrines?" I answer, It may be that of thousands for aught you know, and if it be not that of myriads, no thanks to you, Sir, for you have given them encouragement enough, [though I still do you the justice to say, you have done it *undesignedly*;] And lest they should forget your former inuendo, in this very page you say, that "the covenant of grace" [including, no doubt, *finished salvation*] "standeth sure in behalf of the elect under *every trial, state, and circumstance*, they can possibly be in;" which, if I mistake not, implies that they may be in the impenitent "*state*" of drunken Lot, and adulterous David; or in the dangerous "*circumstances*" of idolatrous Solomon, and the incestuous Corinthian, without being less interested in *finished salvation*, than if they served God with Noah, Job, and Daniel. To this answer I add Flavel's judicious observation: "If the principle will yield it, it is in vain to think corrupt nature will not catch at it, and make a vile use and dangerous improvement of it." But you say, p. 7. "You know in your conscience, that we deter and abhor that damnable doctrine and position of real Antinomians, *Let us sin, that grace may abound*."—I believe, Sir, that *all pious Calvinists*, and consequently *you*, abhor that horrible tenet *practically*, so far as you are saved from sin. And yet, to the great encouragement of practical Antinomianism, you have made an enumeration of the good that *sin*, yea *any length* in sin, unto adultery, murder, and incest, does to the pleasant children. You have assured them that *sin shall work for their good*; and you have closed the strange plea by saying, that "a grievous fall will make them sing louder the praises of free, restoring grace to all eternity in heaven." Now, Sir, pardon me, if I tell

you my whole mind : Really, to this day, I think, that if I wanted to make Christ publicly *the minister of sin*, and to poison the minds of my hearers by preaching an Antinomian sermon from these words, *Let us sin, that grace may abound*, I could not do it more effectually than by showing, according to the doctrine of your fourth Letter, 1. That, upon the whole, sin can do us no harm : 2. That, far from hurting us, it will work for our good : And 3. That even a grievous fall into adultery and murder, will make us “sing louder in heaven ; all debts and claims against believers, be they more or be they less, be they small or be they great, be they before or be they after conversion, being for ever and for ever cancelled by Christ’s fulfilling the law for them.” In the name of reason, I ask, where is the difference between publishing these unguarded tenets, and saying roundly, *Let us sin, that grace may abound* ?

Do not reply, Sir, that this objection was brought against St. Paul as well as against you and therefore the apostle’s doctrine and yours exactly coincide ; for this would be impeaching the innocent to screen the guilty. The charge of *indirectly* saying, *Let us sin, that grace may abound*, is absolutely false when it is brought against St. Paul ; but alas, it is too true when produced against the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*. Where did that holy apostle ever say, that *sin works for our good* ? When did he declare that the Lord *overrules sin*, even adultery and murder, for *the good of his backsliding people* ; and that grievous falls in this world will make us more joyful in the next ? But you know, Sir, who has published those maxims, and who stands to them even in a *Finishing Stroke* : intimating still, that it is God’s “*secret will*” to do good to his people by *the abominable thing which his soul hateth*, p. 55. l. 36, &c. O Sir, hell is not farther from heaven, than this doctrine from that of the apostle : for while you absolutely promise fallen believers *louder songs* in heaven, he conditionally threatens them with *much sorer punishment* in hell, Heb. x. 29. and Christ says, *Go and sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee*. But your scheme says, Go any length in sin, and a more excellent thing shall happen unto thee : “A grievous fall will drive thee nearer to Christ.”

Leaving you to reconcile yourself with holy Paul and our blessed Lord, I beg leave to account for the warmth with which you sometimes plead *for*, and sometimes *against* sin. As a good man, you undoubtedly “detest and abhor” this dangerous maxim of the great Diana of the Antinomians ; “*sin works for good to believers* :” but as a sound Calvinist, you plead for it, yea, and you father it upon the apostle too : see Third Check, p. 231. This contrariety in your

sentiments, may be illustrated by Judah's inconsistent behaviour to Tamar.

As Tamar was an agreeable woman, Judah took an *Antinomian* fancy to her, gave her his *signet, bracelets, and staff*, for a pledge ; and faithfully sent her a kid from the flock. But as she was his disgraced daughter-in-law, big with a bastard child, though he himself was the father of it, he rose against her with uncommon indignation, and said, in a fit of *legality*, *Bring her forth that she may be burnt !* O that, instead of calling me " a spiritual calumniator," and accusing me of " *vile falsehood, and gross perversion,*" for bearing my testimony against a similar inconsistency, you would imitate the undeceived patriarch, take your signet and bracelets again ; I mean, call in your fourth Letter, that fatal pledge sent me from the press of your great Diana, and from this time know her again no more ! Gen. xxxviii. 26.

Sect. IV. But you are not put out of countenance by your former mistakes, for, p. 8, 9. speaking, it seems, of those mistaken good men, " who say more at times for sin than against it," or of those who traduce obedience, and make void the law through faith : representing it as ■ bare rule of life, the breaking of which will in the end work for the believer's good ; you say : " Though I have begged you so earnestly in my Review, to point out by name who these wretches" [you should say, these persons] are : though I have told you, that without this the charge of slander must be for ever at your door ; still neither they nor their converts are produced, no, nor one quotation from their writings, in order to prove these black charges upon them." Here ■ a heap of gross mistakes. I have not only produced one quotation, but many, both from Dr. Crisp's writings and your own. See Second Check, p. 143 to 146. and Third Check, from p. 217 to 236. Again, that " neither they nor their converts are produced," is a capital oversight. Turn to Fourth Check, p. 355 : " Produce a few of them," says your brother ; to which I answer, " Well, Sir, I produce first, the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, next yourself, and then all the Calvinists, who admire your brother's Fourth Letter, where he not only insinuates, but openly attempts to prove, that David, &c. stood absolved and complete in the everlasting righteousness of Christ, while his eyes were full of adultery, and his hands of blood. Now, Sir, if this was the case of David, it may not only be the case of many, but of all the elect : " For the imaginary covenant of *finished salvation*, stands as sure for fallen believers, who cheat, swear, and get drunk, as for those who commit adultery, murder, and incest.

But since you press me *still* to produce witnesses I promise you to produce by and by the Rev. Mr. Berridge, your second, together with his Antinomian pleas against *sincere obedience*. In the mean time I produce "Mr. Fulsome," together with a quotation from "The Christian World Unmasked." It contains a ludicrous description of a consistent Antinomian, brought over to the doctrines of grace, by I know not which of our Gospel ministers.

His name, says Mr. Berridge, was Mr. Fulsome, and his mother's maiden name was Miss Wanton. 'When the cloth was removed, and some few tankards had gone round, Mr. Fulsome's face looked like the red lion painted on my landlord's sign, and his mouth began to open. He talked swimmingly about religion, and vapoured much in praise of [Calvinistic] perseverance. Each fresh tankard threw a fresh light upon his subject, &c.' No sin, he said, can hurt me. I have had a call, and my election is safe. Satan may pound me, if he please: but Jesus must replevy me. What care I for drunkenness or whoredom, for cheating, or a little lying? These sins may hurt another, but they cannot hurt me. Let me wander where I will from God, Jesus Christ must fetch me back again. I may *fall* a thousand times, but I shall *rise* again: yes, I may fall exceeding foully.'—'And so he did, for instantly he pitched with his head upon the floor, and the tankard in his hand.' *Christian World Unmasked*.

Thus fell the Antinomian champion of *Calvinistic* perseverance. The tankard (adds Mr. Berridge) was recovered, but no one thought it worth their while to lift up Mr. Fulsome.'—And what does Mr. Fulsome care for it, if Jesus Christ *himself* be *absolutely* engaged to raise him up, though he had spilt, not only some of my landlord's ale, but all my landlord's blood? Let Mr. Fulsome take a peaceful nap upon the floor, till he can call for another tankard; it will never hurt him, for Mr. Hill declares that "the covenant of grace standeth sure in behalf of the elect under every trial, state, and circumstance they can possibly be in: and that God overrules sin *for their good*." *Finishing Stroke*, p. 6. and p. 55.

Upon the principles of Calvinism no logician in the world can, I think, find a flaw in the following arguments of Mr. Fulsome. If I am *unconditionally* elected, *irresistible* grace will certainly save me at last; nay, my *salvation* is already *finished*: And for this tankard, and twenty more, I shall only "sing louder" in heaven the praises of free, distinguishing, restoring grace, which, passing by thousands, viewed me with unchangeable love, and determined to save me with an everlasting salvation, without any regard to that "jack-o'-lantern, *sincere obedience*." If, on the other hand, I am *unconditionally* reprobated, I

shall absolutely be damned.—Again, supposing Christ never died for me, not only all my faith, but also all my endeavours and works, [were they as many as those of Mr. J. W.] like a “*jack-o’lantern*,” will only dance before me to the pit of hell.—Once more, if I am *absolutely* justified, it is not all the tankards and harlots in the world, that can blot my name out of the book of life. And if I am in the black book, my *damnation* is as good as *finished*. My *sincere obedience* will never reverse a personal, absolute decree, older and firmer than the pillars of heaven. Nay, it may be the readiest way to hell; for our Vicar, who is one of the first Gospel ministers in the kingdom, tells us, that “the devil was surely the author of the condition of sincere obedience,” and that “thousands have been lost by following after it.” Landlord, bring in another tankard.—Here is the health of all those who do not legalize the Gospel!

Mr. Berridge is too good a logician, to attempt proving, that Mr. Fulsome’s creed is not quite rational upon the principles of Calvinism. He only says, p. 192. “such scandalous professors are found at all times, in our day, and in St. Paul’s day, yet St. Paul will not renounce the doctrine of perseverance.”—True; he will not renounce *his own* doctrine of *conditional* perseverance, because it is the very reverse of the doctrine of absolute, or *Calvinistic* perseverance, from which Mr. Fulsome draws his horrible, and yet just inferences.

But, says Mr. B. p. 178, “A believer’s new nature makes him hunger for implanted righteousness;” insinuating that a believer’s holy nature puts him upon such spontaneous obedience to his “rules of life,” that he needs not the help of a *law* as a *rule of rewards and punishments*, to encourage him in the path of duty, and to keep him from the broad way of disobedience. As this is one of the grand arguments by which pious Calvinists defend the Antinomian Babel, I shall answer it first as an anti-Calvinist, and Mr. Fulsome next as a Calvinist.

1. Experience shows, that, to secure the creature’s obedience, or the Creator’s honour, the curb of a law is necessary for all *free agents*, who are yet in a state of probation; and that so long as we are surrounded with so many temptations to faint in duty, and to leave the thorny way of the cross for the flowery paths of sin, the spur and bridle of a promising and threatening law are needful, even with respect to those duties which natural or supernatural inclination renders in general delightful; such as for mothers to take care of their own children, and believers to do good to their neighbours. Now as the civil law, that condemns murderers to death, does not except *mothers* who destroy the fruit of their womb, because natural affection makes them

in general glad to preserve it : so the penal law of Christ makes no exception in favour of *believers*, who fall into adultery and murder, under the Calvinistic pretence, that their new nature makes them in general hunger after purity and love. See 1 Cor. vi. 8, 9.—Again, all sophisms flee before matter of fact. Fallen angels and our first parents, *once* naturally hungered after righteousness, more than most believers do ; and yet they grossly apostatized. And if you object to these instances, I produce David and the incestuous Corinthian. Both had a “ new nature ” as *believers* ; and yet, as *fallen* believers, the one could thirst after Uriah’s blood, and the other hunger after his father’s wife, far more than after “ implanted righteousness.” But,

2. Mr. Fulsome may answer Mr. Berridge as a Calvinist, thus ; My new nature will make me hunger for implanted righteousness “ in the day of God’s power : ” God will do his own work : In the mean time I am “ in a winter season : ” *I am carnal and sold under sin*, as well as St. Paul, and I thirst after my tankard as David did after Bathsheba’s beauty, and Uriah’s blood : thus the Antinomian gap remains as wide as ever.

It is true also that Mr. Berridge says, p. 173, “ Cheats will arise : And how must we deal with them ?—Deal with them, Sir, why hang them, when detected ; as Jesus hanged Judas.” I thought that Judas and not Jesus was the hangman. But I let that pass, to observe, that Mr. Fulsome may justly ask : Why will you hang me ? Does not our Lord, speaking of his elect, say, “ He that touches you, touches the apple of mine eye ? If Mr. Berridge answer : You are no elect : you are a hypocrite ; you never had grace : Mr. Fulsome may justly reply, upon the plan of the Calvinistic doctrines of grace, “ I have had a call, and my election is safe. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect ? Whom he called, them he also justified : yea, they are justified from *all* things. You have no more right to condemn me as a hypocrite, because you see me with a tankard in my hand, than to pass a sentence of hypocrisy upon all backsliders. How will you prove that I have not as much right to toss my tankard as David to write a sanguinary letter : Solomon, to worship devils : and the incestuous Corinthian, to invade the rights of his father’s bed ? I will maintain the privileges of God’s children against all the legalists and the Wesleys in the world : I will fight for *free* grace to the last drop in my tankard.—My service to you ! ”

If Mr. Fulsome’s arguments are *conclusive*, as well as *Calvinistical*, how can he be brought to give up his Antinomian creed ? Undoubtedly by being brought to give up Calvinism. Till then it is evident that he will still hold his doctrines of grace in *theory*, or in *practice* ;

indirectly and with mental reserves, as all *pious* Calvinists do ; or openly and without shuffling, as he does in his confession of faith. Thus has Mr. Berridge presented the world with an Antinomian creed, as horrid as that, which I have composed with the unguarded principles of your Fourth Letter. And by acknowledging, that "such scandalous professors as Mr. Fulsome are found at all times," he has confirmed the necessity of my Checks, shown they are really Checks to *Antinomianism*, and not "Checks to the Gospel," silenced those who have accused me of *misrepresentation*, and helped me to give the world a just idea of Calvinistic principles. I say *principles*, because many, very many Calvinists, like Mr. Berridge, are too moral not to reject in their *practice*, and not to explode as detestable in their *discourse*, the immoral inferences, consistent Antinomians justly draw from their doctrines of grace.

Sect. V. Having thus complied with your request, Sir, by producing "*a quotation*" from an eminent Calvinist divine, to show that I do not fight against a shadow when I oppose Mr. Fulsome ; and having described a rational "*convert*" to your doctrines of grace : I return to the Finishing Stroke, where, to ward off the blow given to your system by the orthodoxy and bad conduct of the Fulsomes,

P. 9. You offer to show me "a long black list of deluded creatures [some of whom have been principal leaders in Mr. W.'s classes, &c.] who have been carrying on abominations and wicked practices under the mask of religion." And you tell us they are "some of the fruits which the doctrines" of Mr. Wesley "have produced." But you have forgot the proof, unless you think that your bare assertion is quite sufficient. Suppose that one out of twelve of Mr. W.'s class leaders had actually turned out ■ "temporary monster," what could you infer from it against Mr. W.'s doctrine, but what the Pharisees could, with equal truth, or rather with equal injustice, have inferred against the doctrine of our Lord ?

By what plain and easy consequence, or by what scriptural argument will you make it appear, that even the most abhorred of all Mr. W.'s doctrines, that of *Christian Perfection*, [or, which is all one, that of believing in Christ with ■ penitential faith, till we love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves,] has any more tendency to turn his hearers into "temporary monsters," than our Lord's Sermon upon the Mount had to turn his apostles into covetous traitors ? But how can you free *your* doctrine from the dangerous consequences which flow from it as naturally as a river does from its source ? Have I not just proved, I hope to the satisfaction of judicious readers, that Mr. Fulsome's practice perfectly

agrees with your Calvinistic principles? O Sir, that vapourer in favour of *your* perseverance, fairly and consistently builds upon what your brother calls "the foundation of the Calvinists," that is, *unconditional* election and *finished* salvation: he is a wise master-builder. Apply the most exact plummet of reason to the walls of his Antinomian Babel, and you will find them straight. They do not project a hair's breadth from your doctrines of grace, which are the foundations laid in some of our celebrated pulpits, for him and all the clan of the Fulsomes to build upon. He is a *judicious* monster; he has reason and your orthodoxy on his side. But the monsters of your long black list [supposing it to be a true one] are barefaced hypocrites, equally condemned by their reason and profession: for so far as they adhere to Mr. W.'s doctrine, their *principles* are diametrically opposed to their *practice*, and therefore he is no more accountable for their "abominations" than our Lord was for Judas's treason.

Sect. VI. Page 12, 13. You leave me in full possession of the scriptures, arguments, and quotations from our Homilies and Liturgy, which I have advanced in the Fourth Check; supposing that when you have called them "the novel chimeras of the Fourth Check," or a "mingle mangle;" and that when you have referred your readers to "the faith of Mr. Ignorance," you have given my sentiments a *Finishing Stroke*. To such forcible arguments I can make no better and shorter reply than that of my title-page, *Logica Genevensis!* However,

P. 11. You decide that my illustration of the woman dropping her child down the precipice "is totally foreign to the purpose," i. e. does not at all prove that Calvinism fathers "unprovoked wrath" upon the God of love. But how do you make it appear?—Why, you insinuate, that "man has forfeited all right and title to the favour of God by his fall in Adam;" and therefore God has been justly provoked to drop the reprobates down the precipice of sin into hell, by an eternal, unconditional, absolute decree of non-election.

The argument is specious, and has deceived thousands of simple souls into Calvinism; but can it bear examination? Who, or what provoked God to make, from all eternity, a decree of absolutely dropping Adam down the precipice of sin, and the reprobated part of his posterity down the precipice of damnation? Was it the sin of reprobates? No: for millions of them are as yet unconceived, and therefore *sinless*; for what has not yet a *substance*, cannot yet have a *mode*; what does not yet exist, cannot yet be sinful. Was it a *fore-sight* of their sin? No: for upon the Calvinistic plan, God *certainly foresees* what *will* happen, only because he has *absolutely decreed* what

SHALL happen. Was it Adam's sin, as you insinuate? No: for Adam's sin was committed *in time*, and therefore could not influence an *absolute* decree of personal reprobation made *before time*, yea, from all eternity. But you add:

P. 11, 12. "If you believe that the transgression of our first parent entailed no condemnation upon his posterity, why did you subscribe to the IXth article of our church, which says, that *in every man born into the world it deserves God's wrath and damnation*:" I apprehend you mistake, Sir: that article says no such thing. What it affirms of a derivation of Adam's corruption, or of "*the fault and corruption of the nature of every man*," you represent as spoken of Adam's *personal* transgression; which is absolutely confounding the *cause* and the *effect*. Every anti-Calvinist may, and I, for one, do believe, that *in every man born into the world*, and considered according to the first covenant, original corruption (not Adam's transgression) *deserves* God's wrath and damnation at the hands of a holy and righteous God; without dreaming that any man shall be ever damned for it; seeing that, according to God's mercy and goodness displayed in the second covenant, Christ the *second Adam* is come to taste death for *EVERY man*, and to be the Saviour of *ALL men*; so that for his sake, the *free gift* is come upon *ALL men* to justification of life. See the Fourth Check, p. 358, &c. Thus, by looking at our divine compass—the word of God, we sail through the straits of error, keeping at an equal distance from the rocks against which Calvinists run on the right hand, and the Pelagians on the left.

I have warded off the *Stroke*, which you have attempted to give my sentiments with our IXth Article; and now it is but just, you should suffer me to return it. If I am not mistaken, that Article is repugnant to Calvinism in two respects. 1. It says not one word about the *imputation* of the demerits of Adam's first transgression; but makes original sin to consist only in the "*infection of our nature*;" which saps the foundation of your imaginary imputation of Adam's personal sin, and consequently ruins its counterpart, namely, your imaginary imputation of Christ's personal good works, distinct from some actual participation of his holiness. 2. It affirms, that this infection in every person *born into the world*, deserves God's wrath: A strong intimation this, that it did not actually *deserve* that wrath, *before* we were actually defiled by a sinful birth or conception. Now this, if I mistake not, implies, that of all the men now living upon the earth, not one actually *deserved* God's wrath and damnation 200 years ago. So that if God *absolutely* reprobated one man now living, *three hundred*, much more, *six thousand* years ago, much more from *all*

eternity, he did it according to Calvin's doctrine of rich, free, unprovoked, gratuitous, *undeserved* wrath. O ye considerate Englishmen, stand to your Articles, and you will soon shake off Geneva impositions!

Sect. VII. P. 12. You say in your moral creed about faith and works:—"Faith, when genuine, will always manifest its reality by bringing forth good works, and all the fruits of a holy life." Now, Sir, if you stand to this, without secret reserves about a "winter state," in which a *genuine believer* [so called] may commit adultery, murder, and incest, for many months, without losing the character of *a man after God's own heart*, and his title to heaven; you make up the Antinomian gap, you set your seal to St. James's epistle, you ratify the Checks; and consequently you give up the Fourth Letter, which contains the very marrow of Calvinism: unless by some salvo of Geneva Logic you can reconcile these two propositions, which upon the rational and moral plan of the Gospel, appear to me utterly irreconcilable: 1. Faith, when genuine, *always* brings forth *all* the fruits of a holy life.—2. A man's faith may be genuine while he goes *any length in sin*, and brings forth *all* the fruits of an *unholy* life; adultery and murder not excepted.

SECT. VIII. My quotation from Dr. Owen, which sets Calvinistic contradiction in a most glaring light, seems to embarrass you much, p. 14, &c. You produce passage upon passage out of his writings, to show that he explodes "the distinction of a double justification." But you know, Sir, the Doctor had as much right to contradict himself in his writings, as you to militate against yourself in your Review: See Fourth Check, First Let. Besides, I have already observed, (Fourth Check, Tenth Let.) that "a volume of such passages, instead of invalidating the doctrine I maintain," [or the quotation I produce] "would only prove that the most judicious Calvinists cannot make their scheme hang tolerably together." However, you say,

P. 13, 14. "He [Dr. Owen] drops not the least intimation of any fresh act of justification, which is then to pass upon a believer's person."—What, Sir, has not the Doctor said, in his Treatise upon Justification, p. 222, "Whenever this inquiry is made, not how a *sinner*, &c. shall be *justified*, which is" (as we are all agreed, *by faith*, or to use the Doctor's unscriptural phrase) "by the righteousness of Christ alone imputed to him: but how a man that professes evangelical faith in Christ shall be tried and judged; and whereon as such" (i. e. as a believer) "he shall be *justified*: we grant that it *is* and *must be by his own personal obedience*." Now, Sir, if the Doctor has said this, and

you dare not deny it ; has he not said the very thing which I contend for ?

When you affirm, that he makes no mention of a *fresh act* of justification, do you not betray your inattention ? Does he not declare, that a sinner is justified by imputed righteousness, and that a believer, as such, shall be tried and *justified* by his own personal obedience ? Now if justification is the *act* of justifying, are you not greatly mistaken, when you represent the *justification* of a sinner by Christ's imputed righteousness, and the justification of a believer or a *saint*, by his own personal obedience, as *one* and the *same* act ? Permit me, Sir, to refer you to the argument contained in the Fourth Check, p. 263 ; on which, next to the words of our Lord, Matt. xii. 37. I chiefly rest our controversy about justification. An argument, the answering of which [if it can be answered] would have done your cause more honour and service, than what you are pleased to insinuate next concerning Mr. Wesley's honesty and mine.

D. Williams, out of whose book I copied my quotation from Dr. Owen, being a Calvinist, and as clear about a sinner's justification by faith as Dr. Owen himself, for brevity's sake left out what the Doctor says about it under the Calvinistic phrase of *Christ's imputed righteousness*. Here, as if D. Williams's wisdom were duplicity in me, p. 14, you triumph not only over me, but over Mr. Wesley, thus : " I never dare trust to Mr. Wesley or Mr. Fletcher in any quotations, &c.—More words expunged by Mr. Fletcher out of the short quotation he has taken from Dr. Owen."—But suppose I had *knavishly expunged* the words, which D. Williams *wisely left out* as useless to his point, what need was there of reflecting upon Mr. Wesley on the occasion ? O ye doctrines of free grace and free wrath, how long will ye mislead good men ? How long will ye hurry them into that part of practical Antinomianism, which consists in *rash* accusations of their opponents, in a lordly contempt of their gracious attainments, and in repeated insinuations that they pay no regard to common honesty ?

When a combatant is too warm, he frequently gives an unexpected advantage to his antagonist. You are an instance of it. Your eagerness to reflect upon Mr. W. and me, has engaged you to present the world with a clause, which, though it was useless to the question debated by D. Williams, is of singular use to me in the present controversy, and in a manner decides the point. For in the passage left out by D. Williams, Doctor Owen speaks of the justification of a *sinner*, and says, as I have observed, that he is "justified by the righteousness of Christ alone imputed to him : " and *this* justification he evidently opposes to that of a *believer*, which, says he, " is and must

be by his own personal obedience." So that the world (thanks be to your controversial heat !*) sees now, that even your champion, in one of those happy moments, when the great Diana did not stand in his light, saw, and held forth the important *distinction* between St. Paul and St. James's justification, that is, between the justification of a *sinner* by Christ's *proper* merits, according to the first Gospel axiom ; and the justification of a *saint* by *his own personal obedience* of faith, or by Christ's *derived* merits, according to the second Gospel axiom.

Nor is this a new distinction, (you would say, a "novel chimera") among Protestants : for looking lately into a treatise upon good works, written by La Placette, that famous Protestant champion and confessor abroad, who, after he had left his native country for righteousness sake, was minister of the French church at Copenhagen, p. 272, Amst. edit. 1700, I fell upon this passage : "Les Protestants de leur cote distinguent double justification, celle du pecheur, et celle du juste, &c. : " That is, "Protestants on their part distinguish a twofold justification, that of the *sinner*, and that of the *righteous*," &c. Then speaking of the latter, he adds, "The justification of the righteous, considered as an act of God, implies three things : 1. That God acknowledges for righteous, him that is actually so : 2. That he declares him such : and 3. that he treats him as such." How different is this threefold act of God from that which constitutes a *sinner's* justification ? For *this* justification being also considered as the *act* of God, implies, 1. That he pardons the sinner : 2. That he admits him to his favour : and 3. That under the Christian dispensation, he witnesses this double mercy to the believing sinner's heart, by giving him a *sense of the peace which passes all understanding*, and a *taste of the glory which shall be revealed*. However, as if all this were a mere "chimera," you say,

P. 17. "Having fully vindicated Dr. Owen from the charge you have brought against him of holding two justifications, &c."—Nay, Sir, you have not vindicated him *at all* in this respect : all that you have proved is, that he was no stranger to *your* logic, and that his love for the great Diana of the Calvinists made him inconsistently deny at one time, what at another time his hatred of sin forced him to confess. Nor is this a new thing in mystic Geneva. You know a pious Gentleman, who after militating in a book called the Review, against the declarative justification by works, which I contend for, drops these words, which deserve to be graven in brass, as an eternal monument of Calvinistic contradiction. "Neither Mr. Shirley, nor I, nor any

* The second instance of this heat, so favourable to my cause, may be seen in the Appendix, (No. 10.)

Calvinist, that I ever heard of, deny that a sinner" [should you not have said *a believer*?] "is declaratively *justified by works*, both here and *at the day of judgment*," Review, p. 149. Now, if no Calvinist you ever heard of, denies, in his luminous intervals, the very justification which I contend for in the Checks, do you not give a *finishing stroke* to Calvinistic consistency when you say, p. 18, "I am determined to prove my former assertion against you, viz. that you cannot find one Protestant divine among the Puritans, &c. till the reign of Charles II, who held your doctrines?" (you mean those of a sinner's justification by faith, and of a saint's justification by works, according to Gal. ii. 16. and Matt. xii. 37.) Is it not granted on all sides, that they held the *former* justification? And do you not tell the world, No Calvinist that you ever heard of, denied the *latter*? However, while you thus candidly confess, that all Protestant divines *held* those capital doctrines of the Checks, I should not do you justice, if I did not acknowledge, that few, if any of them, held them *uniformly and consistently* in England, till Baxter began to make a firm stand against "Antinomian dotages."

Sect. IX. P. 20. You produce these words of mine, taken from the Fourth Check, "Your imputation stands upon a preposterous supposition, that Christ the righteous was an execrable sinner." To this you reply with the warmth of a gentleman, who has learned politeness in mystic Geneva; "I tell you, Rev. Sir, with the bluntness and honesty of an Englishman, that this is execrable Swiss slander."—Now, Sir, that what you call "*execrable Swiss slander*," is *sterling English truth*, I prove by these quotations from your favourite divine Dr. Crisp, who, as quoted by D. Williams, says, p. 328. *God makes Christ as very a sinner as the creature himself was.*—Again, p. 270. *Nor are we so completely sinful, but Christ being made sin, was as completely sinful as we.*—And it is well known that Luther, in one of his unguarded moments, called Christ the *greatest*, and consequently the most execrable sinner in the world. Now, Sir, if "*Christ was as completely sinful as we*," (to use the words of your oracle) does it not follow, that he was a SINNER as completely EXECRABLE as we are? And that you deviate a little from brotherly kindness, when you call Crisp's Calvinistic mistake an *execrable slander of mine*.

Sect. X. P. 21, 22. You find fault with my saying, "Is this (Christ's praying for Peter) a proof that he never prayed for Judas?" And you declare, that this "*assertion*" (you should have said *query*) "*doe little honour to the advocacy of Christ.*" Permit me, Sir, to explain myself. Though I believe with Bishop Latimer, that *Christ shed as*

much blood for Judas as for Peter, I never said nor believed, as you insinuate, "That Christ took more pains for the salvation of Judas than for that of Peter." You cannot justly infer it from my mentioning a matter of fact recorded in Scripture, *viz.* that *once* our Lord spoke to Judas, when he only *looked* at Peter; for he had explicitly warned Peter *before*. Therefore in either case, Christ showed himself void (not of a peculiar regard for Peter's peculiar sincerity, but) of Calvinistic partiality. Again; I am persuaded, that during the day of Judas's visitation, Christ prayed for him, and sincerely too: for if Christ had borne him a grudge, and in consequence of it, had always made mental reserves, and excepted him, when he prayed for his apostles; would he not have broken the second table of the law? And might he not be proposed as a pattern of inveterate malice, rather than of perfect charity?

You reply, p. 22. "If this were the case," (i. e. if our Lord prayed for Judas) "those words of his, *I know thou hearest me always*, must be untrue; for when he prayed for Judas his prayer was rejected." But is your inference just? Christ always prayed with divine wisdom, and according to his Father's will. Therefore he prayed consistently with the eternal decree, that *moral* agents shall be invited, drawn, and gently moved, but not *forced* to obey the Gospel. Now, if our Lord prayed *conditionally* for Judas, (as he certainly did for *all* his murderers, since they were not all forgiven) he might say, *I know thou hearest me always*; and yet Judas might, by his perverseness, as a free agent, reject *against himself* the gracious counsel of God, till he was absolutely given up. Thus our scheme of doctrine, instead of dishonouring Christ's advocacy, represents it in a rational and Scriptural light; while yours, I fear, wounds his character in the tenderest part, and fixes upon him the blot of cunning uncharitableness and profound dissimulation.

Sect. XI. P. 25. You say: "Time would fail me to pretend to enumerate the many gross misrepresentations, &c. However, as you have actually represented me as saying, that the more a believer sins upon earth, the *merrier* he will be in heaven, I beg you will point out to me where, in the plain, easy sense of my words, I have spoken any such thing; or where I have ever used so ludicrous an expression as *mirth*, &c. when speaking of those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore."

I conclude my Antinomian creed thus, Fourth Check, p. 328. "Adultery, incest, and murder, shall, upon the whole, make me holier upon earth and merrier in heaven."—Two lines below, I observe, that "I am indebted to you for all the doctrines, and *most* of

the expressions of this creed.”—You have therefore no right to say, “Where have I used the *expression merry?*” for I never said you have used it, though our Lord has, Luke xv. 32. But as you have a right to say, Where is the *Doctrine?* I reply: in your Fourth Letter: where you tell us, that a *grievous fall* will make believers *sing louder in heaven to all eternity*. Now as *louder songs* are a certain indication of *greater joy*, where nothing is done in hypocrisy, I desire even Calvinists to say, if I have wrested “the plain, easy sense of your words, in observing that, according to your scheme, apostates shall be *merrier*, or, if you please, *more joyful*, in heaven for their *grievous falls* on earth.

P. 27. “Now, Sir, give me leave to pick a feather out of your high-soaring wings, &c. by asking you simply, whence have you taken it?” [this quotation, so called] “Did I ever assert any thing like this? &c. Prove your point, and then I will confess that you are no calumniator of God’s people.” I answer,

1. I did not produce, as a *quotation*, the words which you allude to: I put them in commas, as expressive of the *sentiments* of “*many good men* :” how then could you think, that you alone are *many good men*? 2. But you say that you, for one, understand the words of St. John, *He that does righteousness is righteous*, of personal holiness. Now to prove me a “*calumniator*,” you have only to prove that David *did righteousness* when he defiled Uriah’s wife; for you teach us, directly or indirectly, that when he committed that crime he was “*undefiled*,” and continued to be “*a man after God’s own heart*,” i. e. a *righteous man*, for the Lord alloweth the *righteous*, but the *ungodly* does his soul abhor. 3. However, if I have mistaken one of the scriptures on which you found your doctrine, I have not mistaken the doctrine itself. What are the words for which you call me “*a calumniator*,” and charge me with “*horrid perversion, falsehood, and base dissingenuity?*” Why, I have represented “*many good men*,” as saying (by the general tenor of one of their doctrines of grace, the absolute perseverance of fallen, adulterous, idolatrous, incestuous believers,) “Let not Mr. W. deceive you: he that actually liveth with another man’s wife, worships abominable idols, and commits incest with his father’s wife, may not only be righteous, but complete in imputed righteousness,” &c. This is the doctrine I charge upon many good men: and if you, for one, say, “Did I ever assert any thing like this?” I reply, Yes, Sir, in your Fourth Letter, which is a professed attempt to prove, that believers may, like adulterous David, idolatrous Solomon, and the incestuous Corinthian, go *any length* in sin without ceasing to stand complete in, what I beg leave to call, Calvinistic

righteousness." Thus, instead of "plucking a feather out of my wings," you wing the arrow which I let fly at your great Diana.

Sect. XII. For brevity's sake, I shall reduce my answer to the rest of your capital charges into plain queries, not doubting but my judicious readers will see their unreasonableness, without the help of arguments.

1. Is it right in Mr. Hill to call, (p. 34, 35.) my *Extract* from Flavel, "a citation," and "a quotation;" and then to charge me with "disingenuity, gross perversion, expunging," &c. because I have not swelled my *extract* by transcribing *all* Flavel's book, or because I have taken only what suits the present times, and what is altogether consistent? Especially when I have observed, Fourth Check, p. 292. "That when Flavel encounters Antinomian errors as a disciple of Calvin, his hands hang down, Amalek prevails, and a shrewd logician could, without any magical power, force him to confess, that most of the errors which he so justly opposes, are the natural consequences of Calvinism?"

2. Is it right in Mr. Hill to charge me, p. 57, with "*base forgeries*;" and to represent me, p. 56, as *descending to the poor, illiberal arts of forgery and defamation*," because I have presented the public with a parable, in the dress of a royal proclamation, which I produce as a mere "*illustration*"—because I charge him with indirectly propagating tenets which as necessarily flow from *his* doctrines of grace, as light does from the sun,—and because I have distinguished by commas, a creed framed with his avowed principles? although I have added these words, to show that I took the composition of it upon myself; "You speak indeed in the third person, and I in the first, but this alters not the doctrine.—Some clauses and sentences I have added, not to misrepresent and blacken," (for what need is there of blackening the sable mantle of midnight?) "but to introduce, connect, and illustrate your sentiments."

3. Angry as the Pharisees were at our Lord, when he exposed their errors by parables, did they ever charge him with *base forgery*, because his "*illustrations*" were not true stories? Is it not strange that this admirable way of defending "the truth," should have been found out by the grand defender of "the doctrines of grace?"—Again, if marking with commas a paragraph of our composing, to distinguish it from our own real sentiments, is a crime; is not Mr. Hill a criminal as well as myself? Does he not, p. 31, present the public with a card of his own composing, in which he holds forth the supposed sentiments of many clergymen, and which he distinguishes with commas thus: "The Feather's Tavern fraternity present compliments to

Messrs. J. Wesley and Fletcher," &c.—Shall what passes for wit in the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, be *gross disingenuity*, and *base forgery* in the author of the *Vindication*?—O ye candid Calvinists, partial as your system is, can you possibly approve of *such* glaring partiality?

4. Is it right in Mr. Hill to take his leave of me in this abrupt manner, p. 39, 40. "The unfair quotations you have made, and the shocking misrepresentations and calumnies you have been guilty of, will for the future prevent me from looking into any of your books, if you should write a thousand volumes:" And this especially under pretence, that I have "shamefully perverted and misrepresented the doctrines of Anthony Burgess," when I have simply produced a quotation from him, in which there is not a *shadow* of misrepresentation, as the reader will see by comparing Fourth Check, p. 281, with the last paragraph of the XIIth Sermon of Mr. Burgess on *Grace and Assurance*?

Sect. XIII. This perpetual noise about *gross misrepresentations*, *shameful perversions*, *interpolations*, *base forgeries*, &c. becomes Mr. Hill as little as any man; his own *inaccuracy* in quotation equalling that of the most inattentive writer I am acquainted with. Our readers have seen on what a *slender* basis he rests his charge of "*base forgeries*:" I beg leave to show them now, on what *solid* ground I rest my charge of *uncommon inaccuracy*; and not to intrude too long upon their patience, I shall just produce a few instances only out of his *Finishing Stroke*.*

* To produce such instances out of the *Review*, would be almost endless. One, however, Mr. Hill *forces* me to touch upon a second time. This is the case. The sword of the Spirit which Mr. Wesley uses, is two-edged. When he defends the *first* Gospel axiom against the Pharisees, he preaches *Salvation, not by the merit of works, but by believing in Christ*: And when he defends the *second* Gospel axiom against the Antinomians, he preaches *Salvation, not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition*. No sooner did the Calvinists see this last proposition at full length in the Minutes, than they took the alarm, fondly imagining that Mr. Wesley wanted to overthrow the Protestant doctrine of salvation by faith. To convince them of their mistake, I appealed to Mr. Wesley's Works in general, and to the Minutes in particular, two sentences of which evidently show, that he had not the least intention of setting aside *faith in Christ*, in order to make way for the anti-christian *merit of works*. Accordingly I laid those sentences before my readers, taking special care to show, by commas, that I produced two different parts of the Minutes, thus: "*Not by the merit of works,*" but by "*believing in Christ.*" Here is not a shadow of disingenuity; either as to the quotations, for they are fairly taken from the Minutes; or as to the sense of the whole sentences: for fifty volumes, and myriads of hearers can testify, that it perfectly agrees with Mr. W.'s well-known doctrine. But what does Mr. Hill? Biassed by his system, he tampers with my quotations; he takes off the two commas after the word *works*; he overlooks the two commas before the word *believing*! he [inadvertently, I hope] throws my two distinct quotations into one; and by that mean adds to them the words "*but by,*" which I had particularly excluded. When he has thus turned my two just

1. That performance does not do my Sermon justice, for p. 51, Mr. Hill quotes me so; "They (good works) are declarative of our free justification:" whereas my manuscript runs thus: "They are the declarative *cause* of our free justification," viz. in the day of trial and of judgment. The word *cause* here is of the utmost importance to my doctrine, powerfully guarding the Minutes and undefiled religion. Whether it is left out because it shows at once the absurdity of pretending that my old sermon "is the best confutation of Mr. Wesley's Minutes;" or because Mr. Hill's copier omitted it first, is best known to Mr. Hill himself.

2. I say in the Fourth Check, p. 370, "To vindicate what I beg leave to call God's honesty, permit me to observe, first, that I had

quotations into one that is false, he is pleased to put me into the Geneva pillory for *his own* mistake; and as his doctrines of Grace teach him to kill two birds with one stone, he involves Mr. Wesley in my gratuitous disgrace, thus: "Forgeries of this kind have long passed for no crime with Mr. Wesley; I did not think you would have followed him in these ungenerous artifices," Review, p. 27.

Upon the remonstrance I made about this strange way of proceeding (see note, Fourth Check, vol. i. 286,) I hoped that Mr. Hill would have hanged down his head a moment, and dropped the point for ever. But no: He must give a finishing stroke, and drive home the nail of his rash accusation, by calling my remarks upon his mistakes, "Attempts to vindicate that most shameful false quotation, he [Mr. Fletcher] has twice made from the Minutes," Log. Wesl. p. 35. And to prove that my *attempts* have been unsuccessful, he produces passages out of a newspaper, which represent "His majesty,"—"stealing bread."—"Her majesty,"—"committed to the house of correction." To this I answer, that if such unconnected quotations (of which I only give here the substance) were properly distinguished by commas; if they were separated by intervening words; and if they did not in the least misrepresent the author's sense, it would be great injustice to call them either "*a most shameful false quotation*," or "*a forgery*." Now these three particulars meet in my two quotations from the Minutes: 1. They are both properly distinguished with commas: 2. They are parted by intervening words: And 3. They do not in the least *misrepresent* Mr. Wesley's meaning: Whereas [to say nothing more of my commas expunged in the Review,] no word intervenes between Mr. Hill's supposed quotations out of the papers: and they form a *shameful misrepresentation* of the publisher's meaning.

Oh! but, as the quotations from the Minutes are *linked*, they "speak a language directly opposite to the Minutes themselves." So says Mr. Hill, without producing the shadow of a proof. But, upon the arguments of the Five Checks, I affirm that the two Gospel axioms, or my linked quotations and the Minutes, agree as perfectly with each other, as those positions of St. Paul, to which they answer: "*By grace ye are saved through faith*."—Therefore, "*Work out your salvation with fear*."

From this redoubled stroke of Mr. Hill, I am tempted to think, that, like *Justice*, Logica Genevensis has a covering over her eyes: but alas! for a very different reason.—Like her also she has a *balance* in her left hand; but it is to weigh out and vend her own assertions as proofs. And, like her, she holds a *sword* in her right hand; but alas! it is often to wound brotherly love, and stab evangelical truth. Bring her into the field of Controversy, and she will at once cut down Christ's doctrine as *dreadful heresy*. Set her in the Judgment-seat to pass sentence over *good works*, and over *honest men*, that do not bow at her shrine; and without demur she will pronounce, that the former are *dung*, and that the latter are *knives*.

rather believe, Joseph told once ‘*a gross untruth*,’ than to suppose that God *perpetually* equivocates.” For undoubtedly of two evils I would choose the least, if a cogent dilemma obliged me to choose either. But this is not the case here ; the dilemma is not forcible ; for in the next lines I show, that Joseph, instead of “telling a gross untruth,” only spake the language of brotherly-kindness. However, without paying any regard to my vindication of Joseph’s speech, Mr. Hill catches at the conditional words, “I had rather believe :” Just as if I had said, *I do actually believe*, he turns them into a peremptory declaration of my faith, and three times represents me as *asserting* what I never said nor believed : Thus, p. 38, “Your wonderful *assertion*, that Joseph told his brethren a gross untruth :”—Once more, p. 39, “The repeated words of inspiration you venture to call gross untruth.” Solomon says, “Who can stand before envy ?” And I ask, “Who can stand before Mr. Hill’s inattention ?” I am sure neither I, nor Mr. Wesley. At this rate he can undoubtedly find a *blasphemy* in every page, and a *farrago* in every book.

3. Take another instance of the same want of exactness. I say, in the Fourth Check, p. 277, “I never thought Mr. Whitefield was clear in the doctrine of our Lord, *In the day of judgment by thy words shalt thou be justified* ; for if he had seen it in a proper light, he would instantly have renounced Calvinism.”—This passage Mr. Hill quotes thus, in italics and commas, p. 23, “*You never thought him clear in our Lord’s doctrine, for if he had, he would have renounced his Calvinism.*” The inaccuracy of this quotation consists in omitting those important words of our Lord, *In the day of judgment, &c.* By this omission that sense of the preceding clause is left indefinite, and I am represented as saying, that Mr. Whitefield was not clear in *any doctrine of our Lord*, no, not in that of the fall, repentance, salvation by faith, the new birth, &c. This one mistake of Mr. Hill is sufficient to make me pass for a mere coxcomb in all the Calvinistic world.

4. It is by the like inattention that Mr. Hill prejudices also against me the friends of Mr. Wesley. In the Fourth Check, after having answered an objection of the Rev. Mr. Hill against Mr. Wesley, I produce that objection again for a fuller answer, and say, “But *supposing*, that Mr. Wesley had not properly considered, &c. what would you infer from thence ? &c. Weigh *your* argument, &c. and you will find it is wanting :” Then I immediately produce Mr. Hill’s objection in the form of an argument, thus : “Twenty-three, or, if you please, three years ago, Mr. Wesley wanted clearer light,” &c. Now what I evidently produce as a *supposition*, and as the Rev. Mr. Hill’s own argument unfolded in order to answer it, my opponent fathers upon

me thus, "*The following are your own words.*" "*Three years ago Mr. Wesley wanted clearer light,*" &c.—True, they are my own words; but to do me justice Mr. Hill should have produced them as I do, namely, as a *supposition*, and as the drift of his brother's objection in order to show its frivolousness. This is partly such a mistake as if Mr. Hill said, *The following are David's own words*, "Tush! there is no God."

However, he is determined to improve his own oversight, and he does it by asking, p. 17, "What then is become of thousands of Mr. Wesley's followers, who died before this *clearer light* came?"—An argument this, by which the most ignorant Papists in my parish perpetually defend their idolatrous superstitions; "What is become of all our forefathers, say they, before Luther and Calvin? Were they all damned?"—Is it not surprising, that Mr. Hill, not contented to produce a Popish friar's conversation, should have thus recourse to the argument of every Popish cobbler, who attacks the doctrines of the Reformation? O Logica Genevensis! how dost thou show thyself the genuine sister of the Logica Romana!

5. I return to the mistakes, by which Mr. Hill has supported before the world his charge of "calumny." I say, in the Second Check, vol. i. p. 135, '*How few of our celebrated pulpits are there, where more has not been said at times for sin than against it?*' Mr. Hill, p. 7. says. "The ministers, who preach in these (our most celebrated pulpits) are condemned *without exception*, as such *pleaders for sin*, that *they say more for it, than against it.*" Here are two capital mistakes: 1. The question, *How few?* &c. evidently leaves room for *some exceptions*; but Mr. Hill represents me as condemning our most celebrated pulpits "*without exception.*" 2. This is not all: To mitigate the question, I add, *at times*, words by which I give my readers to understand, that sin is *in general* attacked in our celebrated pulpits, and that it is only at times, that is, on some particular occasions, or in some part of a sermon, that the ministers alluded to, say more for sin than against it. Now, Mr. Hill leaves out of his quotation the words, *at times*, and by that mean effectually represents me as "a calumniator of God's people:" For what is *true* with the *limitation* that I use, becomes a falsehood when used without it. This omission of Mr. Hill is the more singular, as my putting the words, *at times*, in italics, indicates that I want my readers to lay peculiar stress upon it on account of its importance. One more instance of Mr. Hill's inaccuracy, and I have done.

6. P. 7, 8. He presents his readers with a long paragraph, produced as a quotation from the Second Check. It is made up of some

detached sentences picked here and there from that piece, and put together with as much wisdom as the patches which make up a fool's coat. And among these sentences he has introduced this, which is not mine in sense, any more than in expression, "They [celebrated ministers] handle no texts of Scripture without distorting them," for I insinuate just the contrary, in the Second Check, p. 137.

7. But the greatest fault I find with that paragraph of Mr. Hill's book, is the conclusion, which runs thus,—“They [celebrated ministers] do the devil's work, till they and their congregations all go to hell together. Third Check, p. 176, 179.”—Now in neither of the pages quoted by Mr. Hill, nor indeed any where else, did I ever say so wild and wicked a thing. Nothing could engage my pious opponent to father such a horrid assertion upon me, but the great and severe Diana, that engages him to father absolute reprobation upon God.

It is true, however, that alluding to the words of our Lord, Matt. xxv. I say in the Second Check, vol. i. p. 160. “If these shall go into everlasting punishment,” &c. But who are *these*? *All celebrated ministers, with all their congregations*? So says Mr. Hill, but happily for me, my heart starts from the thought with the greatest detestation, and my pen has testified, that *these* condemned wretches are, in general, “*Obstinate workers of iniquity,*” and in particular, *unrenewed anti-Calvinists, and impenitent Nicolaitans.*” Page 156, vol. i. [the very page which Mr. Hill quotes,] I describe the unrenewed anti-Calvinists thus, “Stubborn sons of Belial, saying, Lord, thy Father is merciful: and if thou didst die for all, why not for us?” “Obstinate Pharisees, who plead the good they did in their own name to supersede the Redeemer's merit.”—Impenitent Nicolaitans, or Antinomians, I describe thus, p. 158, 159, 160. “Obstinate violators of God's law—who scorned personal holiness—rejected Christ's word of command—have gone on still in their wickedness—have continued in doing evil—have been unfaithful unto death—and have defiled their garments to the last.”—Is it possible that Mr. Hill should take this for a description of *all* celebrated ministers, and of *all* their congregations; and that upon so glaring a mistake, he should represent me as making them “*all go to hell together!*”

Sect. XIV. O ye pious Calvinists, whether ye fill our celebrated pulpits, or attend upon them that do, far from sending you “*all to hell together,*” as you are told I do, I exult in the hope of meeting you *all together in heaven*: I lie not; I speak the truth in him that shall justify us by our words: even now I enjoy a foretaste of heaven in lying at your feet in spirit; and my conscience bears me witness, that though I try to detect and oppose your mistakes, I sincerely love and

honour your *persons*. My regard for you, as zealous defenders of the *first* Gospel axiom, is unalterable. Though your mistaken zeal should prompt you to think or say all manner of evil against me, because I help Mr. Wesley to defend the *second*; I am determined to offer you still the right hand of fellowship. And if any of you should honour me so far as to accept it, I shall think myself peculiarly happy; for, next to Jesus and Truth, the esteem and love of good men is what I consider as the most invaluable blessing. A desire to recover the interest I once had in the brotherly-kindness of some of you, has in part engaged me to clear myself from the mistaken charges of *calumny* and *forgery*, by which my hasty opponent has prejudiced you against me and my Checks. If you find that he has defended your cause with *carnal weapons*, hope with me, that *precipitation* and *too warm a zeal* for your doctrines, have misled him, and not *malice* or *disingenuity*.

Hope it also, ye Anti-Calvinists, considering that if St. James and St. John, through mere bigotry and impatience of opposition, were once ready to command fire from heaven to come down upon the Samaritans, it is no wonder that Mr. Hill, in an unguarded moment, should have commanded the fire of his Calvinistic zeal to kindle against Mr. Wesley and me. As you do not unchristian now the two rash apostles for a sin, of which they immediately repented; let me beseech you to confirm your love towards Mr. Hill, who has probably repented already of the mistakes, into which his peculiar sentiments have betrayed his good nature and good breeding.

Sect. XV. I return to you, honoured Sir, and beg you would forgive me the liberty I have taken to lay before the public what I should have been glad to have buried in eternal oblivion. But, your *Finishing Stroke* has been so heavy and desperate, as to make this addition to *Logica Genevensis* necessary to clear up my doctrine, to vindicate my honesty, to point out the *mistaken* Author of the Farrago, and give the world a new specimen of the arguments, by which your system must be defended, when reason, conscience, and Scripture, [the three most formidable batteries in the world] begin to play upon its ramparts.

You "*earnestly entreat*" me in your Postscript, to publish a manuscript sermon on Rom. xi. 5, 6. that I preached about eleven years ago in my church, in defence of the first Gospel-axiom. You are pleased to call it three times "*excellent*," and you present the public with an extract from it, made up of some unguarded passages; detached from those that in a great degree guard them, explain my meaning, confirm the doctrine of my Checks, and sap the foundation

of your mistakes. As I am not less willing to defend *free grace*, than to plead for *faithful obedience*; I shall gladly grant your request, so far at least as to send my old sermon into the world with additions in brackets, just as I preached it again last spring; assuring you that the greatest addition is in favour of *free grace*. By thus complying with your "*earnest entreaty*," I shall show my respect, meet you half way, gratify the curiosity of our readers, and yet give them a specimen of what appears to me a free, guarded Gospel.

That Discourse will be the principal piece of *An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism*, which I have prepared for the press. Upon the plan of the doctrines it contains, I do not despair to see moderate Calvinists, and unprejudiced Anti-Calvinists, acknowledge their mutual orthodoxy, and embrace one another with mutual forbearance. May I and you set them the example! In the mean time may the brotherly love, with which we forgive each other the real or apparent unkindness of our publications, continue and increase! May the charity that is *not provoked*, and *hopeth all things*, uniformly influence our hearts! So shall the words that drop from our lips, or distil from our pens, evidence that we are, or desire to be, the close followers of the meek, gentle, and yet impartial, plain-spoken Lamb of God. For his sake, to whom we are both so greatly indebted, restore me to your former benevolence, and be persuaded, that notwithstanding the severity of your *Finishing Stroke*, and the plainness of my answer, I really think it an honour, and feel it a pleasure, to subscribe myself, honoured and dear Sir, your affectionate and obedient Servant in the Gospel of our common Lord,

J. FLETCHER.

MADELEY,
Sept. 13, 1773.

APPENDIX,

Upon the remaining difference between the Calvinists and the Anti-Calvinists, with respect to our Lord's doctrine of Justification by Words, and St. James's doctrine of Justification by Works.

TO force my opponents out of the last intrenchment in which they defend their mistakes, and from behind which they attack the *Justification by words and works* peculiarly insisted on by our Lord and St. James ; I only need to show how far we agree with respect to that justification ; to state the difference that remains between us ; and to prove the unreasonableness of considering us as *Papists* because we oppose an unscriptural, and irrational distinction, that leaves Mr. Fulsome in full possession of all his Antinomian dotages.

On both sides we agree to maintain, in opposition to Socinians and Deists, that the *grand*, the *primary*, and *properly meritorious* cause of our justification, from first to last, both in the day of conversion and in the day of judgment, is only the *precious atonement*, and the *infinite merits* of our Lord Jesus Christ.—We all agree likewise, that in the day of conversion, faith is the *instrumental cause* of our justification before God. Nay, if I mistake not, we come one step nearer each other, for we equally hold, that, after conversion, the works of faith are in this world, and will be in the day of judgment, the *evidencing cause* of our justification : that is, the works of faith [under the above-mentioned primary cause of our salvation, and in subordination to the faith that gives them birth] are now, and will be in the great day, the *evidence* that shall instrumentally *cause* our justification as believers. Thus Mr. Hill says, Review, p. 149, “Neither Mr. Shirley nor I, nor any Calvinist that I ever heard of, deny, that though a sinner be justified in the sight of God by Christ alone, he is declaratively justified by works, both here and at the Day of Judgment.” And Mr. Madan, in his Sermon on *Justification by works*, &c. stated, explained, and reconciled with *Justification by faith*, &c. says, p. 29, “By Christ only are we meritoriously justified, and by faith only are we instrumentally justified in the sight of God ; but by works and not by faith only, are

we *declaratively justified before men and angels.*" From these two quotations, which could easily be multiplied to twenty, it is evident, that pious Calvinists hold the doctrine of a justification by the works of faith, or, as Mr. Madan expresses it, after St. James, *by works, and not by faith only.*

It remains now to show wherein we disagree. At first sight the difference seems trifling, but upon close examination it appears, that the whole Antinomian gulf still remains fixed between us. Read over the preceding quotations; weigh the clauses which I have put in italics; compare them with what Mr. Berridge says in his *Christian World Unmasked*, p. 26, of "an *absolute* impossibility of being justified in *any manner* by our works," namely, *before God*; and you will see, that although pious Calvinists allow, we are justified by works *before men and angels*, yet they deny our being ever justified by works *before God*, in whose sight they suppose we are for ever "*justified by Christ alone*," i. e. only by Christ's good works and sufferings absolutely imputed to us, from the very first moment in which we make a single act of true faith, if not from all eternity. Thus works are still entirely excluded from having any hand either in our intermediate or final justification *before God*, and thus they are still represented as *totally needless* to our *eternal* salvation. Now, in direct opposition to the above-mentioned distinction, we Anti-Calvinists believe, that adult persons cannot be saved without being justified *by faith as sinners*, according to the light of their dispensation; and *by works as believers*, according to the time and opportunities they have of working:—We assert, that the *works* of faith are not less necessary to our justification *before God* as believers; than *faith* itself is necessary to our justification *before him*, as sinners:—And we maintain, that when faith does not produce good works [much more when it produces the worst works, such as adultery, hypocrisy, treachery, murder, &c.] it dies, and justifies no more; seeing it is a *living*, and not a *dead faith*, that justifies us as sinners; even as they are *living*, and not *dead* works, that justify us as believers. I have already exposed the absurdity of the doctrine, that works are necessary to our final justification *before men and angels*, but *not before God*. However, as this distinction is one of the grand subterfuges of the decent Antinomians, and one of the pleas by which the hearts of the simple are most easily deceived into Solifidianism, to the many arguments that I have already produced upon this head, in the Sixth Letter of the Fourth Check, I beg leave to add those which follow:

1. The way of making up the Antinomian gap by saying, that works are necessary to our intermediate and final justification *before*

men and angels, but not before God, is as bad as the gap itself. "If God is for me (says judicious Mr. Fulsome) who can be against me? If God has for ever justified me *only by Christ*, and if works have absolutely no place in my justification *before him*, what care I for *men and angels*? Should they justify when God condemns, what would their absolution avail? And if they condemn when God justifies, what signifies their condemnation? All creatures are fallible. The myriads of men and angels are as nothing before God. He is all in all." Thus Mr. Fulsome, by a most judicious way of arguing, keeps the field of licentiousness, where the Solifidian ministers have inadvertently brought him, and whence he is too wise to depart upon their brandishing before him the broken reed of an absurd distinction.

2. Our justification by works, will *principally*, and in some cases *entirely*, turn upon the works of the heart, which are unknown to all but God. Again, were men and angels in all cases to pass a decisive sentence upon us according to our *works*, they might judge us severely, as Mr. Hill judges Mr. Wesley; they might brand us for forgery upon the most frivolous appearances; at least they might condemn us as rashly as Job's friends condemned him. Once more: were our fellow-creatures to condemn us decisively by our *works*, they would often do it as unjustly as the disciples condemned the blessed woman, who poured a box of very precious ointment on our Lord's head. They had indignation, and blamed as uncharitable *waste*, what our Lord was pleased to call *a good work wrought upon him*,—a good work, which shall be told for a memorial of her, as long as the Christian Gospel is preached. To this may be added the mistake of the apostles, who, even after they had received the Holy Ghost, condemned Saul of Tarsus by his former, when they should have absolved him by his latter works. And even now how few believers would justify Phinehas for running Zimri and Cosbi through the body, or Peter for striking Ananias and Sapphira dead, without giving them time to say once, Lord have mercy upon us! Nay, how many would condemn them as rash men, if not as cruel murderers? In some cases, therefore, none can possibly justify or condemn believers by their works, but he who is perfectly acquainted with all the outward circumstances of their actions, and with all the secret springs whence they flow.

3. The Scriptures know nothing of the distinction which I explode. When St. Paul denies that Abraham was *justified by works*, it is only when he treats of the justification of a sinner, and speaks of the *works of unbelief*. When Christ says, *By thy words thou shalt be justified*, he

makes no mention of *angels*. To suppose that they shall be able to justify a world of men by their words, is to suppose, that they have heard, and do remember all the words of all mankind, which is supposing them to be gods. Nay, far from being judged by angels, St. Paul says, that *we shall judge them*; not indeed as proper judges, but as Christ's assessors and mystical members: for our Lord, in his description of the great day, informs us that he, and not men or angels, will justify the sheep and condemn the goats, by their works.

4. St. Paul discountenances the evasive distinction which I oppose, when he says, *Thinkest thou, O man, who doest such things, that thou shalt escape the righteous judgment of God, who will render eternal life to them that by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, &c. when he shall judge the SECRETS of men by Jesus Christ?* For reason dictates, that neither men nor angels, but the *Searcher of hearts* alone, will be able to justify or condemn us by *secrets*, unknown possibly to all but himself.

5. If you say, Most men shall have been condemned or justified long before the day of judgment; therefore the solemn pomp of that day will be appointed merely for the sake of justification by men and angels: I exclaim against the unreasonableness of supposing that *the great and terrible day of God*, with an eye to which the world of rationals was created, is to be only the day of *men and angels*: and I reply:—Although I grant that judgment certainly finds us where death leaves us; final justification and condemnation being chiefly a solemn seal set, if I may so speak, upon the forehead of those whose consciences are already justified or condemned, according to the last turn of their trial upon earth: yet it appears, both from Scripture and reason, that *mankind* cannot properly be judged before the great day: *departed spirits* are not *men*; and dead men cannot be tried till the resurrection of the dead takes place, when departed spirits, and raised bodies, will form *men* again by their reunion. Therefore in the very nature of things, God cannot judge mankind before the great day; and to suppose that the Father has appointed such a day, that we may be finally justified by our works before men and angels, and *not before him*, is to suppose that he has committed the chief judgment to the parties to be judged, i. e. to men and angels, and not to Jesus Christ.

6. But if I mistake not, St. James puts the matter out of all dispute, where he says: *You see then that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*, chap. ii. 24. This shows that a man is justified by works before the same Judge, by whom he is justified by faith; and

here is the proof: nobody was ever justified *by faith* before men and angels, because faith is an inward act of the soul, which none but the *Trier of the reins* can be a judge of. Therefore, as the *Justifier by faith* alluded to in the latter part of the verse, is undoubtedly *God alone*; it is contrary to all the rules of criticism to suppose, that the *Justifier by works* alluded to in the very same sentence, is not God, but *men and angels*. Nay, in the preceding verse *God* is expressly mentioned, and not *men or angels*: *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness*, i. e. he was justified before *God*: so that the *same Lord*, who justified him as a *sinner by faith* in the day of his conversion, justified him also as a *believer by works* in the day of his trial.

7. But this is not all: Turning to Gen. xxii. the chapter which St. James had undoubtedly in view, when he insisted upon Abraham's justification by works, I find the best of arguments—matter of fact. *And it came to pass that God did tempt, i. e. try Abraham.* The patriarch acquitted himself like a sound believer in the hard trial, he obediently offered up his favourite son. Here St. James addresses a Solifidian, and bluntly says, *Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead*, i. e. that when faith gives over working by obedient love, it sickens, dies, and commences a *dead faith*? *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac upon the altar?* If Mr. Hill answers; Yes, he was justified by works *before men and angels*, but not *before God*: I reply: Impossible! for neither men nor angels put him to the trial, to bring out what was in his heart. *God* tried him, that he might justly punish, or wisely reward him; therefore *God* justified him. If a judge, after trying a man on a particular occasion, acquits him upon his good behaviour in order to proceed to the reward of him, is it not absurd to say, that the man is acquitted before the court, but not before the judge; especially if there is neither court nor jury present, but only the judge? Was not this the case at Abraham's trial? Do we hear of any angel being present but מלאך יהוה, the Angel Jehovah? And had not Abraham left his two servants with the ass at the foot of the mount? Is it reasonable then to suppose that Abraham was justified *before them* by a work which as yet they had not heard of; for, says St. James, *When* (which implies as soon as) *he had offered Isaac, he was justified by works?* If you say, that he was justified *before Isaac*; I urge the absurdity of supposing, that God made so much ado about the trial of Abraham before *the lad*: and I demand proof that God had appointed the youth to be the justifier of his aged parent.

8. But let the sacred historian decide the question. *And the Lord called to Abraham out of heaven, and said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, for now I know [declaratively] that thou fearest God, (i. e. believest in God :) Now I can praise and reward thee with wisdom and equity : seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son, from me.* Upon Calvinistic principles, did not God speak improperly ? Should not he have said, *Now angels and men, before whom thou hast offered Isaac, do know that thou fearest me ?* But if God had spoken thus, would he have spoken consistently with either his veracity or his wisdom ? Is it not far more reasonable to suppose, that although God, as *Omniscient*, with a glance of his eyes *tries the hearts, searches the reins, and foresees all future contingencies*, yet as a *Judge*, and a *wise dispenser of punishments and rewards*, he condemns no unbelievers, and justifies no believers, in St. James's sense, but by the *evidence of tempers, words, and actions, which actually spring from their unbelief, or their faith ?*

9. Was it not from the same motive, that God tried Job in the land of Uz, chap. i. 12. ; Israel in the wilderness, Deut. viii. 1. compared with Josh. xxii. 2. ? and King Hezekiah in Jerusalem, 2. Chron. xxxii. 31. ? *God (says the historian) left him (to the temptation) that He (God) might know (declaratively) all that was in his heart.* It is true, Mr. Hill supposes, in the 2d Ed. of his *Five Letters*, that the words, *He might know*, refer to Hezekiah, but Canne, more judiciously refers to Gen. xxii. 1. where God tried Abraham, not that Abraham might know, but that *He himself might declaratively know what was in Abraham's heart.* If the word *that He might know*, did refer to Hezekiah, should not the affix (ו) *he* or *him*, have been added to רָעָה, thus לְרָעָהוּ, as it is put to the two preceding verbs, עָוָהוּ, *he left him*, לְנוֹסָתוּ, *to try him ?*

10. Our Lord himself decides the question, where he says to his believing disciples, *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess BEFORE MY FATHER who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny BEFORE MY FATHER who is in heaven.* It was undoubtedly an attention to this Scripture, that made Dr. Owen say, " Hereby [by personal obedience] that faith whereby we are justified [as sinners] is evidenced, proved, manifested in the sight of God and man." And yet, astonishing ! this passage, which indirectly gives up the only real difference there is between Mr. Hill's justification by works and *ours* ; this passage, which cuts him off from the only way he has of making his escape (except that by which his brother tried to make his own, see Fourth Check, p.

351.) this very passage, which makes so much for my sentiment, is one of those concerning which he says, (*Finishing Stroke*, p. 14.) "Words prudently expunged by Mr. Fletcher," when they are only words, which for brevity's sake I very imprudently left out, since they cut down Solfidianism, even with Dr. Owen's sword.

To conclude: Attentive reader, peruse James ii. where the justification of believers by works before God is so strongly insisted upon: observe what is said there of *the law of liberty*; of believers being *judged by that law*; of the *judgment without mercy*, that shall be shown to fallen, merciless believers according to that law:—Consider that this doctrine exactly coincides with the Sermon upon the Mount, and the Epistle to the Hebrews—that it perfectly tallies with Ezek. xviii. xxxiii. Matt. xii. xxv. Rom. ii. Gal. vi. &c. and that it is delivered to *brethren*, yea, to *the beloved brethren of St. James*, to whom he could say, *Of his own will the Father of lights begat us with the word of truth*:—Take notice, that the charge indirectly brought against them, is, that they *had the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons*; and that they *deceived their own selves*, by not being as careful *doers* as they were diligent *hearers of the word*:—Then look round upon some of our most famous believers; see how foaming, how roaring, how terrible are the billows of their partiality. Read "*An address from Candid Protestants to the Rev. Mr. Fletcher*"; read "*The Finishing Stroke*"; read "*More Work for Mr. Wesley*"; read the Checks to Antinomianism; and say, if there be not as great need to insist upon a believer's justification *by words and works*, as there was in the days of our Lord and St. James: and if it be not high time to say to modern believers, *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons*.—So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the *law of liberty*: for he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy:—For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again, [by him that] shall render to every one according to what he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad."—But "*Candid Protestants*" have an answer ready in their "ADDRESS:" This is "*the Popish doctrine of justification by works*," and "*Arminian Methodism turned out rank Popery at last*."—This is a mingle mangle of "*the most high and mighty, self-righteous, self-potent, self-important, self-sanctifying, self-justifying, and self-exalting MEDLEY Minister*."* The misfortune is, that amidst these witticisms of "*the Protestants*," (for it seems the Calvinists engross that

* See the above-mentioned "*Address from Candid Protestants*."

name to themselves) we, “rank Papists,” still look out for arguments ; and when we find none, or only such as are worse than none, we still say, *Logica Genevensis* ! and remain confirmed in our “dreadful heresy,” or rather in our Lord’s anti-Calvinistic doctrine, *By thy words thou shalt be JUSTIFIED, and by thy words thou shalt be CON-DEMNE*D.

LOGICA GENEVENSI

CONTINUED :

OR,

THE SECOND PART

OF

THE FIFTH CHECK

TO

ANTINOMIANISM.

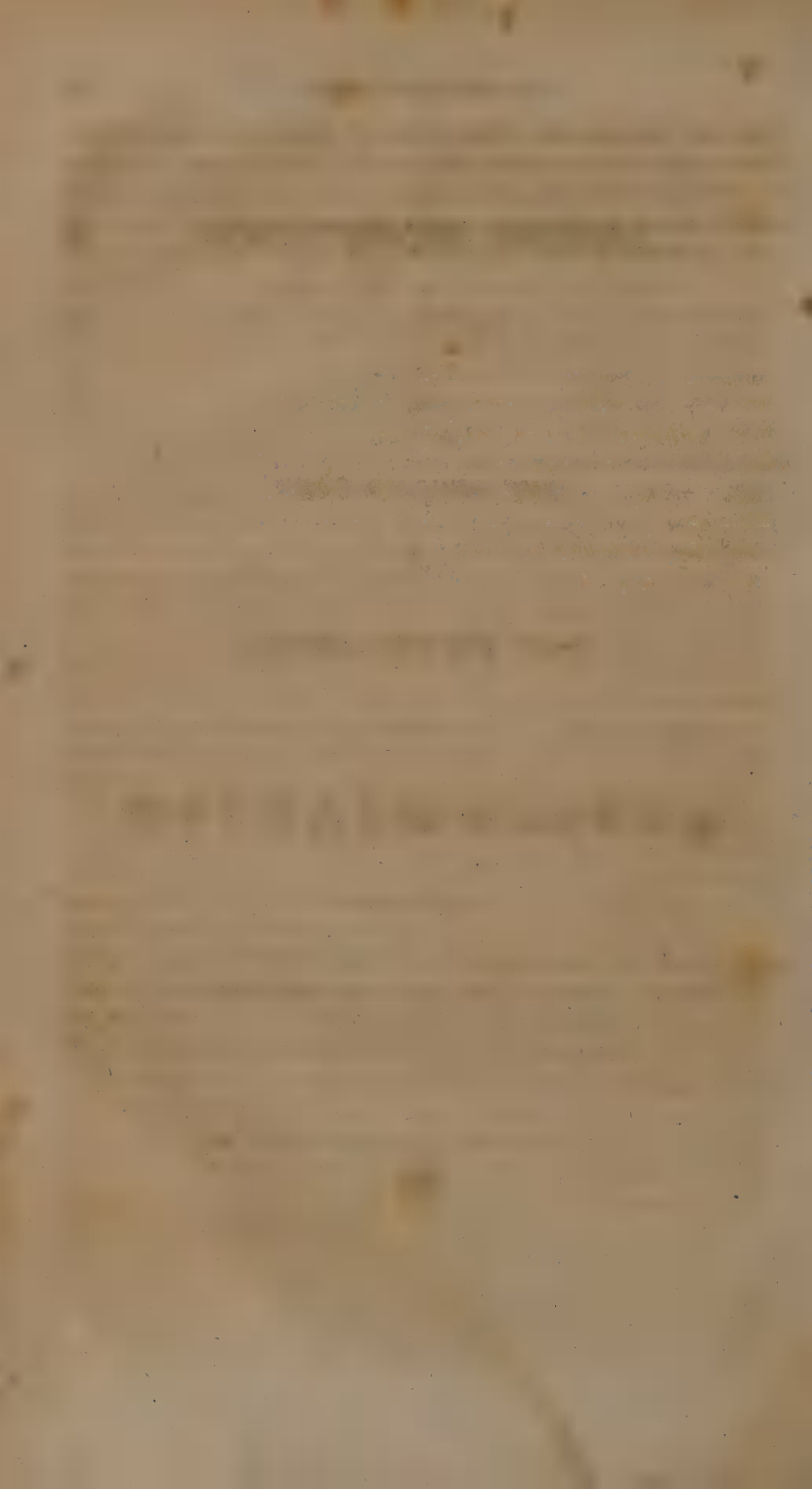
CONTAINING

A DEFENCE OF "JACK O'LANTERN," AND "THE PAPER KITE," i. e. SINCERE OBEDIENCE;--OF THE "COBWEB," i. e. THE EVANGELICAL LAW OF LIBERTY; AND OF THE "VALIANT SERGEANT IF," i. e. THE CONDITIONALITY OF PERSEVERANCE, ATTACKED BY THE REV. MR. BERRIDGE, M. A. VICAR OF EVERTON, AND LATE FELLOW OF CLARE-HALL, CAMBRIDGE, IN HIS BOOK, CALLED "THE CHRISTIAN WORLD UNMASKED."



Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.

1807.



CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND PART OF THE FIFTH CHECK.



INTRODUCTION. Mr. Berridge's uncommon piety and zeal give an uncommon sanction to his dangerous, though well-meant mistakes.

Sect. I. Mr. Berridge advances the capital error of the Antinomians, when he says, that "*Faith must utterly exclude ALL justification by works*;" and when he represents "*the Passport of Obedience*" as a *Paper-kite*.

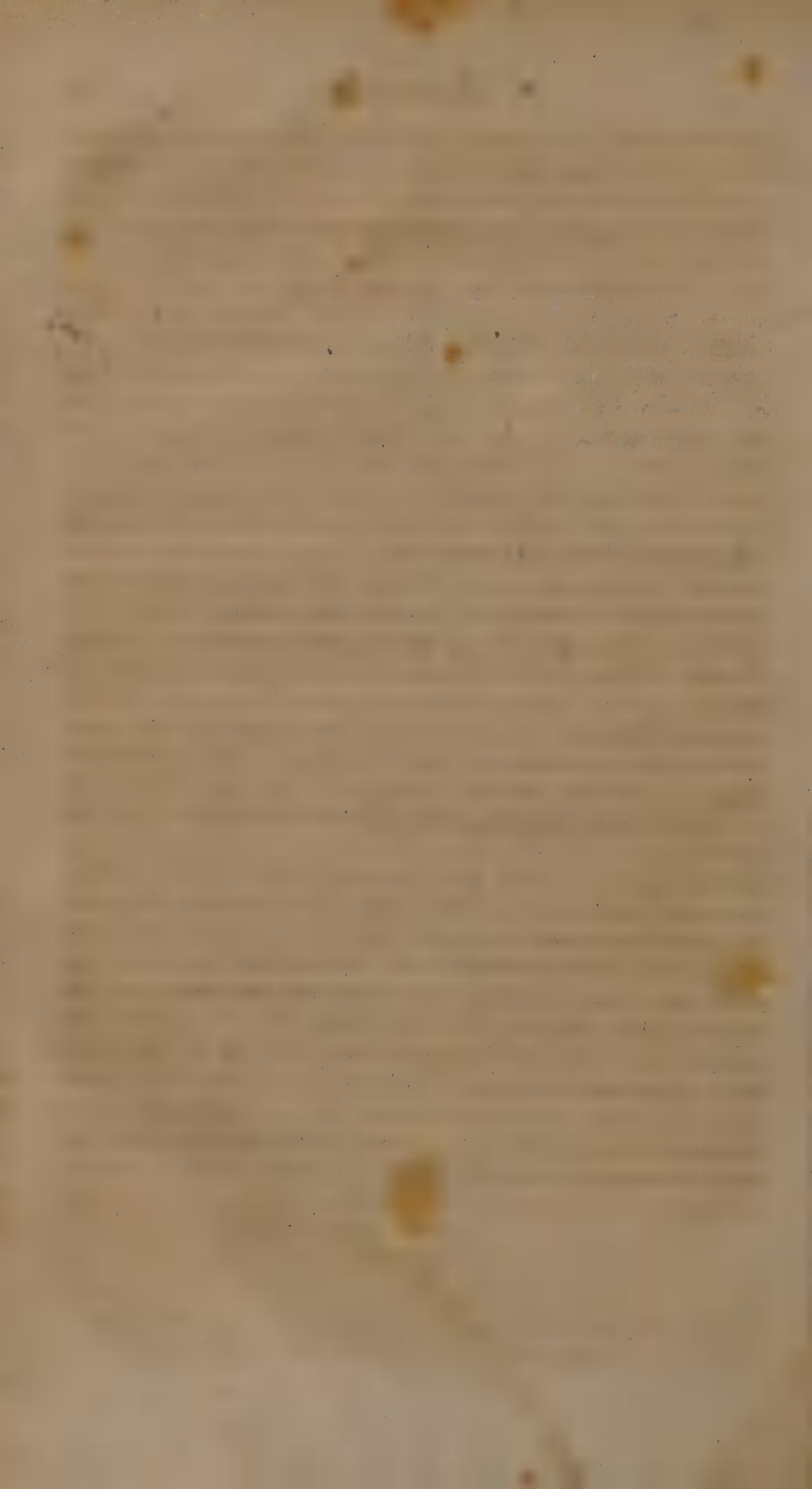
Sect. II. A view of the doctrine of the Solfidians with respect to the Gospel law, or the [Law of Liberty, which Mr. Berridge indirectly calls a "*cobweb*," and with respect to sincere Obedience, which he directly calls "*a jack o' lantern*." With two notes, showing that Mr. Berridge holds the doctrine of *merit of congruity*, as much as Thomas Aquinas; and that Bellarmine held absolute reprobation as much as Mr. Toplady.

Section III. An answer to the dangerous arguments of Mr. Berridge against *sincere obedience*, in which it is proved, that Christ is not "*at the head of the Antinomian Preachers*" for making our duty feasible as redeemed sinners; and that Mr. Berridge's rash pleas against *obedience*, as the *condition of eternal salvation*, totally subvert *Faith* itself, which he calls "*the total term of all salvation*."

Sect. IV. When Mr. Berridge grants, that "*our damnation is wholly from ourselves*," he grants that our salvation is suspended upon some term, which, through grace, we have power to fulfil; and in this case, *unconditional* reprobation, *absolute* election, and *finished* salvation, are false doctrines; and Calvin's whole system stands upon a sandy foundation: with a Note upon a Pamphlet called "*A Check upon Checks*."

Sect. V. Mr. Berridge candidly grants the *conditionality* of perseverance, and consequently of Election, by showing much respect to "*Serjeant IF*," who "*guards the camp of Jesus*:" But soon picking a quarrel with the valiant Serjeant, oddly discharges him as a Jew, opens the camp to the Antinomians by opposing to them only a sham sentinel, and shows the foundation of Calvinism in a most striking light.

CONCLUSION. In which the Author expresses again his brotherly love for Mr. Berridge, makes an apology for the mistakes of his pious antagonist, and accounts for the oddity of his own style in answering him.



INTRODUCTION.

HAVING animadverted on Mr. Hill's *Finishing Stroke*, I proceed to ward off the *first* blow, which the Rev. Mr. Berridge has given to practical religion. But before I mention his mistakes, I must do justice to his person. It is by no means my design to represent him as a divine, who either leads a loose life, or *intends* to hurt the Redeemer's interest. His conduct as a Christian is exemplary ; his labours as a Minister are great : and I am persuaded that the wrong touches which he gives to the ark of godliness, are not only undesigned, but *intended* to do God service.

There are so many things commendable in the pious Vicar of Everton, and so much truth in his *Christian World Unmasked*, that I find it a hardship to expose the unguarded part of that performance. But the cause of this hardship is the ground of my apology. Mr. Berridge is a good, an excellent man, therefore the Antinomian errors, which go abroad into the world with his letters of recommendation, which speak in his evangelical strain, and are armed with the poignancy of his wit, cannot be too soon pointed out, and too carefully guarded against. I flatter myself that this consideration will procure me his pardon, for taking the liberty of despatching his "*Valiant Sergeant*" with some doses of rational and scriptural antidotes for those, who have drunk into the pleasing mistakes of his book, and want his piety to hinder them from carrying speculative into practical Antinomianism.

SECTION I.

ONE of my opponents has justly observed, that "the principal cause of controversy among us," is the doctrine of our justifica-

tion by the *works* of faith in the day of judgment. At this rampart of practical godliness Mr. Berridge levels such propositions as these in his *Christian World Unmasked*, second edition, p. 170, 171. *FINAL justification by faith is the CAPITAL doctrine of the Gospel:—Faith being the term of salvation, &c. must UTTERLY exclude ALL justification by works.*—And p. 26. we read of an *ABSOLUTE impossibility of being justified IN ANY MANNER by our works.*

If these positions be true, say, reader, if St. James, St. Paul, and Jesus Christ, did not advance great untruths when they said, *By WORKS a man is justified, and not by faith only*, James ii. 24. *For not the hearers of the law [of Christ] are just before God, but the doers shall be justified, &c. in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*, Rom. ii. 13, 16. *For, (adds our Lord, when speaking of the day of judgment) by thy words thou shalt be justified, &c.* Matt. xii. 37. Christian reader, say, who is mistaken? Christ and his apostles, or the late Fellow of Clare-hall?

Mr. Berridge goes farther still. Without ceremony he shuts the gates of heaven against every man who seeks to be *justified by works*, according to our Lord's and St. James's doctrine. For when he has assured us, p. 171. that *faith must UTTERLY exclude all justification by works*, he immediately adds, "*And the man, who seeks to be justified by his passport of obedience, will find no passage through the city gates.*" Might not our author have unmasked Calvinism a little more, and told the Christian world, that the man who minds what Christ says, shall be turned into hell?

See the boldness of Solifidianism!* In our Lord's days believers were to keep their mouths as with a bridle, and to abstain from *every idle word*, lest in the day of judgment they should not be *justified*. In St. John's time they were to *do Christ's commandments, that they might enter through the gates into the city*, Rev. xxii. 14.; but in our days, a Gospel minister assures us, p. 171. that the believer, who, according to our Lord's doctrine, seeks to be "*justified by his passport of obedience, will find no passage through the city gates.*" He may talk of the *tree of life*, and *soar up with his PAPER-KITE to the gates of paradise, but will find no entrance.*"—I grant it, if an Antinomian pope has St. Peter's key; but so long as Christ has the key of David, so long as he *opens*, and no Solifidian shuts; the dutiful servant, instead of

* *Solifidianism* is the doctrine of the Solifidians; and the *Solifidians* are men, who, because sinners are justified, [*Sola fide*] by *SOLE FAITH* in the day of conversion, infer, as Mr. Berridge, that "*believing is the total term of all salvation,*" and conclude, as Mr. Hill, that the doctrines of *final justification by the works of faith* in the great day, is "*full of rottenness and deadly poison.*" It is a softer word for *Antinomianism*.

being sent flying to hell after "the paper-kite" of obedience, will, through his Lord's merits, be honourably admitted into heaven *by the passport* of good works, which he has about him. For though the remembrance of his sins, and the sight of his Saviour, will make him ashamed to produce it; yet he had rather die ten thousand deaths, than be found without it. The celestial Porter, after having kindly opened it for him, will read it before an innumerable company of angels, and say, *Enter into the joy of thy Lord, for I was hungry and thou gavest me meat, &c.* Matt. xxv. 35, &c.

If the Vicar of Everton throws in an Antinomian caveat against this "passport of obedience,"* and ridicules it still as a "*paper-kite*," Isaiah and St. Paul will soon silence him. *Open ye the gates*, says the evangelical prophet, *that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth* (of the Gospel doctrines) *may enter in*: For, adds the evangelical apostle, *Circumcision* (including all professions of faith,) *is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Yea, though I have ALL FAITH, and no charity, I am nothing.* Isa. xxvi. 2. 1 Cor. vii. 19. xiii. 2.

If I am at the city gates, when Mr. Berridge will exclaim against the "passport of obedience," I think I shall venture to check his imprudence by the following questions. Can there be a medium between *not having a passport of obedience, and having one of disobedience*? Must a man, to the honour of free grace, take a passport of refractoriness along with him? Must he bring a certificate of adultery and murder to be welcome into the New Jerusalem? I am persuaded that, with the utmost abhorrence, Mr. Berridge answers *No!* But his great Diana speaks louder than he, and says before all the world: "There is no need that he should have a testimonium of adultery and murder, but he may if he please: nay, if he be so inclined, he may get a diploma of treachery and incest: it will never invalidate his title to glory; for if David and the incestuous Corinthian had *saving* faith, *inamissible* eternal life, and *finished* salvation, when they committed their crimes; and if faith or BELIEVING (as Mr. Berridge affirms, p. 168.) be the TOTAL term of ALL salvation," why might not every Christian, if he be so minded, murder his neighbour, worship idols, and gratify even incestuous lusts as well as primitive backsliders, without risking his *finished* salvation? Upon this Antinomian axiom advanced by Mr. Berridge, "*Believing is the TOTAL term of ALL salvation*," I lay my engine, a grain of reason, and ask every unprejudiced person, who is able to conclude that two and two make four,

* I speak only of the *obedience of faith*. It is only for that obedience, and for the *works of faith*, that St. James pleads in his epistle, Mr. Wesley in the Minutes, and I in the Checks. All other obedience is *insincere*—all other works Pharisaical.

whether we may not, without any magical power, heave morality out of the world, or Calvinism out of the Church ?

If Mr. Berridge pleads, that when he says, p. 168, "*Believing is the TOTAL term of ALL salvation*," he means a faith, "including and producing all obedience," I reply, Then he gives up Solifidianism ; he means the very faith which I contend for in the Checks ; and, pressing him with his own definition of faith, I ask, how can a "faith including all obedience," include *murder*, as in the case of David ; idolatry, as in the case of Solomon ; *lying*, *cursing*, and *denying Christ*, as in the case of Peter ; and even *incest*, as in the case of the apostate Corinthian ? Are murder, idolatry, cursing, and incest, "*all obedience* ?"—If Mr. Berridge reply, *No* : Then David, Solomon, &c. lost the *justifying faith* of St. Paul, when they lost the justifying works of St. James ; and so Mr. Berridge gives up the point together with Calvinism.—If he say, *Yes* : he not only gives up St. James's justification, but quite unmasks Antinomianism ; and the rational world, who "come and peep ;" may see that his doctrine of grace is not a chaste virgin, but a great Diana, who pays as little regard to decency, as she does to Scripture.

If this be sophism, I humbly entreat the learned Fellow of Clare-hall to convince the world of it, by showing where the fallacy lies. He can do it if it can be done, "having consumed a deal of candle at a noted hall at Cambridge, in lighting up a good understanding," even after he was declared *master of the art of logic*. But if the dilemma is forcible, and grinds Calvinism as between an upper and nether millstone, I hope that he will no longer oppose the dictates of reason, merely to pour contempt upon our Lord's doctrine of a believer's justification by the words of faith ; and to sport himself with *obedience*, rendered as ridiculous as Sampson was, when the Philistines treated him as a blind mill-horse.

SECTION II.

WE have already seen how Mr. Berridge gives the *passport of obedience* to the winds as a boyish trumpery. To render the "*paper kite*" more contemptible, p. 145, he ties to it, instead of a tail, "*a spruce new set of duties half a yard long, called legally evangelical, and evangelically legal, unknown to Christ and his apostles, but discovered lately by some ingenious gentlemen.*" Just as if I, who have ventured upon those expressions, to indicate the harmony that subsists between the promises of the Gospel and the duties of the law of liberty, and Mr. Wesley, who has let those compounded words pass in the Second

Check, were the first men who have taught, That believers are not without law to God, but under a law to Christ, 1 Cor. ix. 21. Just as if nobody had said before us, *Do we make void the law through faith, or through the Gospel? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law*, Rom. iii. 31. That is, by preaching a faith that worketh by love, we establish the moral law; for *love is the fulfilling of it, and he that loveth another, has fulfilled the law*, Rom. xiii. 8, 10.—Not indeed the ceremonial law of Moses, for ceremonies and love are not the same thing; nor yet the Adamic law of innocence, for if the apostle had spoken of that law, he would have said, “He that has *always* loved another with perfect love, has fulfilled the law.” Therefore he evidently speaks of the evangelical law, preached thus by St. James to believers, *So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty*, James ii. 12. A law, which is so called, not because it gives us the least liberty to sin; but because, during the day of salvation, it indulges us with the precious liberty to repent of our former sins, and come to Christ for pardon, and for stronger supplies of sanctifying grace.

However, Mr. Berridge, as if the Antinomians had already burned St. James’s epistle, says, p. 144, after speaking of the law of innocence given to Adam before the fall, “*All other laws*,” [and consequently the law of liberty] “*are cobwebs of a human brain* :” What, Sir, do you think that Moses was a spiritual spider, when he wove the ceremonial law? Can you possibly imagine that David’s blessed man, whose delight is in *THE LAW of the Lord*, meditates day and night in *■ LAW*, which bids him “*stand upon his own legs*,” and absolutely despair of mercy upon “*a single trip*?” Would you, on second thoughts, say, that St. Paul and St. James weave “*cobwebs*” in the brains of mankind, when they declare, that *the end of the COMMANDMENT* [or of Christ’s law] *is charity, from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned*; when they speak of *FULFILLING the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*; or when they assure us, that *he who loveth another HATH FULFILLED IT*; and exhort us to *bear one another’s burdens, and so FULFIL THE LAW OF CHRIST*? See 1 Tim. i. 5. James ii. 8. Gal. v. 13. and vi. 2.

I shall not borrow here the rash expression which Mr. Berridge uses when he confounds original worthiness, and derived merit, and reflects upon Christ, who evidently attributes the latter to believers; I shall not say, that my new opponent’s mistake “*is enough to make* a*

* How strangely may prejudice influence a good man! Mr. Berridge, p. 164, &c. raises a masked battery against the article of the Minutes, where Mr. Wesley hints, that the word *merit* might be used in a scriptural sense to express what Dr. Owen, by an uncouth circumlocution, calls *the rewardable condecency, that our whole obedience, through*

devil blush ;" but I may venture to affirm, that before he can prove, the law of liberty is "a cobweb," he must not only burn St. James's epistle, but sweep away the epistles of St. Paul to the Romans and to the Galatians ; together with the law, the prophets, and the psalms. While he considers whether the tree of Antinomianism will yield a besom strong enough for that purpose, I beg leave to dwell a moment upon another of his mistakes. It respects obedience and good works, against which Solifidians indirectly wage an eternal war. It runs through several pages, but centres in the following unguarded propositions.

P. 35. l. 18. *Sincere obedience is nowhere mentioned in the Gospel as a CONDITION of salvation ;* and p. 36. l. 4. *Works have no share in the covenant of grace as a CONDITION of life.* I grant it, if by salvation in the first proposition, and by life in the second, Mr. Berridge

God's gracious appointment, has unto eternal life.—"O Sir, (says Mr. Berridge) God must abominate the pride, the insolence of human pride, which could dream of merit: it is enough to make a devil blush." There is great truth in these words, if Mr. Berridge speak only of proper merit, or merit of condignness and equivalence: but if he extend them to the evangelical worthiness so frequently mentioned by our Lord; if he apply them to improper merit, generally called merit of congruity; he indirectly charges Christ with teaching a doctrine so excessively diabolical, that the devil himself would be ashamed of it; and what is more surprising still, if I mistake not, he indirectly enforces the dreadful heresy himself by an ILLUSTRATION, which in some degree shows how God rewards us "for our works, and according to" our works.—"A tender-hearted gentlemen (says he) employs two labourers out of charity, to weed a little spot of four square yards. Both are old and much decrepit, but one is stronger than the other. The stronger weeds three yards, and receives three crowns: the weaker weedeth one, and receives one crown. Now both are rewarded for their labour, and according to their labour, but not for the merit of their labour."—Granted, if merit be taken in the sense of proper merit, or merit of condignness and equivalence; but absolutely denied if it be taken in the sense of improper worthiness, or merit of congruity.—Let Thomas Aquinas, the most famous of all the Papist divines, bring his standard of merit, and measure Mr. Berridge; and if the Vicar of Everton (how loud soever he may exclaim against the word) is not found holding the doctrine of merit of congruity as much as Mr. Baxter, let me for ever forfeit all pretensions to a grain of common sense. "The angelic doctor" defines merit thus; "Dicitur aliquis mereri ex condigno, quando invenitur equalitas inter præmium et meritum secundum estimationem; ex congruo autem tantum quando talis æqualitas non invenitur; sed solum secundum liberalitatem dantis munus tributur quod dantem decet."—That is, "a man is said to merit with a merit of condignness, (i. e. to merit properly,) when, upon an average, there appears an equality between the reward and the merit. But he is said to merit only with a merit of congruity (i. e. to merit improperly) when there is no such equality; and when a benefactor, out of mere liberality, makes a present which it becomes him to make."—Now let candid men compare Mr. Berridge's ILLUSTRATION, with the definition that the most renowned Papist doctor has given us of merit; and let them say if Mr. Berridge, instead of splitting the hair, does not maintain, and ILLUSTRATE the doctrine of merit of congruity; and if one of the blushes which he supposes our Lord's doctrine of worthiness, or merit, would bring upon the face of some modest devil, does not become the author of the Christian World Unmasked more than the author of the Minutes?

means **INITIAL** salvation, and *life* **BEGUN** in the world of grace. For undoubtedly the *free gift is come upon all men to justification*, or salvation from the guilt of original sin, and consequently to some interest in the Divine favour previous to all obedience and works. Again and again have I observed, that as *by one man's disobedience many* [*οἱ πολλοί*, the multitudes of men] *were made sinners*: so, *by the obedience of one, many* [*οἱ πολλοί*, the multitudes of men] *shall, to the end of the world, be made righteous*, i. e. partakers of the above-mentioned justification in consequence of Christ's atonement and the talent of free grace, and supernatural light, which *enlightens every man that comes into the world*. (Compare Rom. v. 18, 19. with John i. 4, 5, 9.) Far from opposing this *initial* **LIFE** of free grace, this **SALVATION** *unconditionally begun*, I assert its *necessity* against the the Pelagians, and its *reality* against the Papists and Calvinists, who agree to maintain that God has * *absolutely* reprobated a con-

* Some of my readers will wonder at my coupling the Calvinists and the Romanists, when I speak of those who hold *absolute* reprobation; but my observation is founded upon matter of fact. We are too well acquainted with the opinion of the Calvinists concerning the vessels of wrath. The sentiments of the Papists, not being so public, may be brought to light by the following anecdote. Being some years ago at Ganges in the south of France, I went with Mr. Pomaret, the Protestant minister of that town, to recommend to Divine mercy the soul of a woman dying in childbed. When he came out of the house he said, Did you take notice of the person who was by the bed-side? He is a man-midwife, and a strenuous Papist. You see by the consequences that this poor woman had a very hard labour. As it was doubtful whether the child would be born alive, he insisted upon baptizing it in the womb, *avec une seringue*, according to custom. The Protestant women in the room exclaimed against his intention of tormenting a woman in that extremity, by so ridiculous and needless an operation. "Needless!" replied he, "how can you call that needless which will save a soul? Do you not know, that if the child dies unbaptized, it will certainly be lost?" The doctrine of the Romish church is then *free* wrath, or *free* reprobation, for the myriads of infants who die without baptism all the world over.

I beg leave to confirm this anecdote by a *public* testimony. My opponents have frequently mentioned the agreement of my sentiments with those of the Popish champion Bellarmine. This gave me a desire of looking into his works. Accordingly, I procured them last winter; and to my great surprise, before I had read a page, I found him a peculiar admirer of the great predestinarian St. Augustine, whom he perpetually quotes. Nay, he is so strenuous an assertor of Calvinistic election, that to prove "*We can give no account of God's election on our part*," among the reasons advanced by Calvin, Coles, Zanchius, &c. in support of unconditional election and reprobation, he proposes the following argument, "*Tertia ratio, &c. ducitur a parvulorum diversitate, quorum aliqui rapiuntur statim, a baptismo, alii paulo ante baptismum, quorum priores ad gloriam prædestinatorum, posteriores ad pœnam reprobatorum pertinere non est dubium; nec possunt hic ulla merita previsa ullus bonus usus liberi arbitrii, aut gratia fingi.*" Bell, *Opera de gratia et libero arbitrio*. Cap. v. *Antverpiæ*, 1611, p. 766. That is, "*The third reason is taken, from the different lot of little children; some being snatched immediately after baptism, and others a little before baptism: the former of whom undoubtedly go to the glory of the elect; and the latter to the punishment of the reprobates. Nor can any desert foreseen, or any good use of free will or of grace be here pretended.*" This argument is truly worthy

siderable part of mankind. But Mr. Berridge's propositions are Antinomianism unmasked, if he extend their meaning (as his scheme does) to *finished salvation*, and to a *life of glory* unconditionally bestowed upon adulterous backsliders: for *sincere obedience*, or the good works of faith, are a condition, (or, to use Mr. Berridge's word, "*a term*,") indispensably required of all that stay long enough upon the stage of life, to act as moral agents. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away*, John xv. 2. *Be not deceived, neither fornicators, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. vi. 9. See Ezek. xviii. and xxxiii. "If the penitent thief had lived, (says our church,) and not regarded the works of faith, he should have lost his salvation again." As for the argument taken from these words, *He that believeth* (now with the heart unto righteousness) *hath everlasting life*, (i. e. has a title to it, and a taste of a life of glory, and shall have the enjoyment of it, *if he continue in the faith rooted and grounded*;) it is answered at large, Fourth Check, vol. i. p. 319, &c.

Page 38, Mr. Berridge unmasks Antinomianism in the following proposition. "*I have gathered up my ends, respecting this matter; and I trust you see at length, that sincere obedience is nothing but a jack o' lantern, dancing here and there and every where. No man could ever catch him, but thousands have been lost by following him.*"

If I mistake not, Mr. Berridge here exceeds Mr. Hill. The author of *Pietas Oxoniensis* only supposes, that works have nothing to do before the Judge of all the earth, in the matter of our eternal salvation; and that all believers shall "*sing louder*" in heaven for all their crimes upon earth. But the Vicar of Everton represents *sincere obedience* (which is a collection of all the good works of upright Heathens, Jews, and Christians,) as "*a jack o' lantern: and thousands*," says he, "*have been lost by following him.*"—Here is a blow at the root!—What! thousands lost by following after *sincere obedience* to God's commands! Impossible!—Our pious author, I hope, means *insincere* obedience; but if he stand to what he has written, he must not

of the cause which it supports. The very essence of Calvinism is an irreconcilable opposition to the second Gospel axiom. And as Bellarmine's argument demolishes that axiom (it being impossible that the *damnation* of reprobated infants should be *from themselves*,) he necessarily builds up Calvinism, with all its gracious doctrines. I might here return my last opponent these words of his *Finishing Stroke*, p. 15. when he writes in capitals, "SO BELLARMINE."—"See, Sir, what company you are found in."—But I do not admire such arguments. Were Father Walsh, and Cardinal Bellarmine in the right, it would be no more disgrace to Mr. Hill to stand between them both, than it is to me to believe with the Cardinal, that Christ has said, *In the day of judgment by thy words thou shalt be justified*.—For, as a diamond does not become a pebble upon the finger of a Papist, so truth does not become a lie under his pen.

be surprised if, with the "*good folks cast in a Gospel foundery, I ring a fire-bell,*" and warn the Protestant world against so capital a mistake. That thousands have been lost by resting in faithless, superficial, hypocritical, *insincere* obedience, I grant: But thousands!—lost! by following after *sincere* obedience, i. e. after the obedience we uprightly perform according to the light we have!—This is as impossible, as that the Holy Spirit should lie when he testifies, "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him;" according to one or another of the Divine dispensations: he is accepted as a converted Heathen, Jew, or Christian.

Had I the voice of a trumpet I would shout upon the walls of our Jerusalem, *Let no man deceive you*: Nobody was ever lost, but for not following after, or for starting from *sincere* obedience; Christian faith itself being nothing but *sincere* obedience to this grand Gospel precept, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*. We have received apostleship (says St. Paul) *for obedience to the faith among all nations*, Rom. i. 5. No adult children of Adam were ever eternally saved, but such as followed after *sincere* obedience, at least from the time of their last conversion, if they once drew back towards perdition. For Christ, says the apostle, *is the author of ETERNAL salvation to them that OBEY him*; and he undoubtedly means that obey him sincerely. He will render eternal life to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, or by persevering in sincere obedience, seek for glory.—Has the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings, says Samuel, as in OBEYING (and I dare say he meant sincerely obeying) the voice of the Lord?—Behold! (whatever Solifidians may say) to OBEY is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams: for rebellion (or disobedience) is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as idolatry. Heb. v. 9. Rom. ii. 7. 1 Sam. xv. 22.

God, to show the high value he puts upon *sincere* obedience, sent Jeremiah to the Rechabites with this message; *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts; therefore Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever*. His capital charge against Israel is that of disobedience. St. Peter, who observes that the believing Jews had purified their souls by obeying the truth, asks, *What shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel?* And St. Paul answers, that Christ will come in flaming fire taking vengeance on them,—and that God will render tribulation and wrath to them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness: and even that famous passage, *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life*, John iii. 36. is in the original a rampart against Soli-

fidianism : for in the last sentence of it, the word rendered *believeth not*, is not *οὐ πιστεύων*, in opposition to the first clause : but *ἀπειθων*, an expression, which, by signifying equally *he who DISOBEYETH*, and *he who believeth not*, guards the doctrine of obedience as strongly as that of faith.

SECTION III.

An Answer to Mr. Berridge's capital Arguments against Sincere Obedience.

THE serious reader probably wonders at the pious Vicar of Everton, and asks, if he supports his assertions against sincere obedience by arguments ? Yes, he does, and some of them are so plausible, that the simple can hardly avoid being deceived by them ; nay, and some of the judicious too. For asking, last summer, a sensible clergyman, what part of Mr. Berridge's book he admired most, he convinced me of the seasonableness of this publication, by replying, "I think him most excellent upon *Sincere Obedience*." A glaring proof this, that the impossibility of deceiving the very elect is not *absolute*, and that our Lord did not give them an *impertinent* caution when he said, *Take heed that no man deceive you*. But let us hear Mr. Berridge.

P. 24, "Perhaps you think that Christ came to shorten man's duty, and make it more feasible by shoving a commandment out of Moses's tables, as the Papists have done ; or by clipping and paring all the commandments, as the moralists do. Thus *sincere* obedience, instead of *perfect*, is now considered as the law of works. But if Jesus Christ came to shorten a man's duty, he came to give us a license to sin. For duty cannot be shortened without breaking commandments. And thus Christ becomes a minister of sin with a witness, and must be ranked at the head of Antinomian preachers."—To this specious argument I reply :

1. After the fall, Christ was given in the promise to mankind as a *Mediator* ; and *help was laid upon him* to make man's duty (as a redeemed sinner) feasible. To deny it, is to deny man's redemption. At that first promulgation of the Gospel, what St. Paul calls *the law of faith*, and St. James, *the law of liberty*, took place. This gracious law has been in force under all the dispensations of the everlasting Gospel ever since. And according to its tenor, in the day of judgment, we shall be *justified or condemned*, Matt. xii. 37. 2. To assert that *the law of liberty*, or *the law of faith*, requires of us para-

disiacal innocence, and such a *perfection* of bodily and rational powers as Adam had before the fall, is to set Christ's mediation aside ; and to suppose that it leaves us just where it found us, that is, under the old Adamic covenant. 3. *The Law of Liberty* "neither shoves out, pares, nor clips" any *moral* commandment ; for it condemns a man for the adultery of the eye, as well as for gross fornication ; and for the murder of the tongue or heart, as well as for manual assassination ; and it requires us to *love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves*, according to the light of our dispensation, and the talent of power we have received from above. He that *keeps this whole law, and breaks it in one point* (as Saul did in the matter of Agag, David in the matter of Uriah, Judas in the matter of Mammon, some Corinthians and Galatians in biting one another, and some of the Christians to whom St. James wrote, in despising the poor, and showing a mean partiality to the rich)—he, I say, that knowingly and wilfully *breaks this law in one point, is guilty of all* ; and he remains under the curse of it, till he has repented, and resumed the obedience of faith. Therefore, when our Lord substituted the law of liberty for the law of innocence, he neither "*gave us a license to sin,*" nor "*became a minister of sin with a witness,*" as Mr. Berridge rashly affirms. 4. The fourth *Mosaic* commandment allows *no manner of work*, but the last edition of the law of liberty allows all manner of works of *necessity* and *mercy*, to be done on the Sabbath. Our Lord, therefore, dispenses with the uncommon rigour, with which the Jews observed the sacred day. And if Mr. Berridge will call that indulgence "*clipping, paring,*" or altering the Fourth Commandment, he is at liberty ; but if we break a commandment in availing ourselves of our Lord's gracious dispensation, why does Mr. Berridge allow his man-servant, his maid-servant, or his horse to work on the Saturday ! Why does he not keep the *seventh* day holy "*like the circumcised race ?*"

5. *Innocent* man with *unimpaired* powers, could yield *perfect* obedience to the *law of innocence* ; therefore that law made no allowance, no provision for any deficiency in duty. Not so the *law of liberty* : for although it allows no wilful sin, yet it does not reject sprinkled, though as yet imperfect obedience. Nor does it, as some divines would persuade the world, curse the bud, because it is not yet the blossom, nor the blossom because it is not yet the fruit, or the fruit because it is not yet ripe ; provided it tends to maturity, and harbours not *insincerity*, the worm that destroys evangelical obedience. It declares, that our works of faith are *accepted according to what we have, and not according to what we have not*. It graciously receives from a

heathen, the-obedience of a heathen ; and from a babe in Christ, the obedience of a babe. And instead of sentencing to hell the man, whose pound has *only* gained *five pounds*, and in whom the seed of the word has *only* produced *thirty-fold* ; it kindly allows him half the reward of him, whose pound has gained *ten pounds*, or in whom the seed has brought forth *sixty-fold*. But it shows no mercy to the *unprofitable servant*, who buries his talent ; and it threatens with *sorer punishment* the wicked servant, who *turns the grace of God into lasciviousness*.

6. " Thus sincere obedience is now considered as the law of works." Not so : but it is considered even by *judicious Calvinists*, as that obedience, which *the law of liberty* accepts of, by which it is *fulfilled*, and through which believers *shall be justified* in the great day. I might fill a volume with quotations from their writings ; but three or four will sufficiently prove my assertion.—Joseph Alleine, that zealous and successful preacher, says in his *Sure Guide to Heaven*, or *Alarm to the Unconverted*, Lond. 1705. p. 153, 154. " The terms of mercy, (he should have said, The terms of *eternal salvation*,) are brought as low as possible to you. God has stooped as low to sinners, as with honour he can. He will not be thought a factor of sin, nor stain the glory of his holiness ; and whither could he come lower than he hath, unless he should do this ? He has abated the impossible terms of the first covenant, Acts xvi. 31. Prov. xxviii. 13. He does not impose any thing unreasonable or impossible, as a condition of life." (Alleine should have said, *as a condition of ETERNAL life IN GLORY* ; for God in Christ most freely gives us *an initial life of grace*, before he puts us upon performing any terms, in order to *an eternal life of glory*.) " Two things were necessary to be done by you according to the first covenant, &c. And for future *obedience*, here he is content to yield to your weakness, and remit the rigour. He does not stand upon" (*legal*) " perfection, &c. but is content to accept of *sincerity*." Gen. xvii. 11.

Matthew Mead in his treatise on *The Good of Early Obedience*, London, 1683, p. 402, says, " It must be an upright and SINCERE OBE-
" DIENCE. *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, Gen. xvii. 1. In the
" margin it is, *sincere or upright*. So that sincerity and uprightness
" is new covenant perfection. The perfection of grace in heaven is
" glory ; but the perfection of grace on earth is *sincerity*." Mr.
Henry perfectly agrees with Mr. Mead, when he thus comments upon
Gen. vi. 9. " *Noah was a just man and perfect* : he was perfect, not
" with ■ sinless perfection, (*according to the first covenant*) but a per-
" fection of sincerity. And it is well for us, that by virtue of the

“covenant of grace, upon the score of Christ’s righteousness, *sincerity* is accepted as our Gospel perfection!”—Hence it is that Dr. Owen says, a believer, “*as such, shall be tried, judged, and justified, by his own personal SINCERE OBEDIENCE.*” Of Justification, p. 111. By comparing these *fair* quotations with Mr. Berridge’s argument, my reader, without having the sagacity of “*an old fox,*” will see, that Antinomianism has lost all decency in our days, and is not ashamed to call “*jack o’ lantern,*” &c. what the sober Calvinists of the last century called *Gospel perfection.*”

Lastly, to insinuate, as Mr. Berridge does, that “*Christ becomes a minister of sin with a witness, and must be ranked at the head of the Antinomian preachers;*” because he has substituted the law of liberty for the old Adamic covenant, is something so ungrateful in a believer, so astonishing in a Gospel minister, that—But I spare the pious Vicar of Everton, and rise against *thee*, O Crispianity! *Thou* hast seduced that man of God, and upon *thee* I charge his dreadful mistake. However, he will permit me to conclude this answer to his shrewd argument by the following query: If “*Christ become a minister of sin, and must be ranked at the head of Antinomian preachers,*” for placing us under the law of liberty, which curses a fallen believer that breaks it in one point, (though it should be only by secretly harbouring malice or lust in his heart) what must we say of the divines, who give us to understand, that believers are not under the law preached by St. James, but under directions or “rules of life,” which they may break unto adultery and murder, without ceasing to be God’s pleasant children, and men after his own heart?—Must these popular men be ranked at the head, or at the tail, of the *Antinomian preachers*?

P. 24. Mr. Berridge advances another argument. “If sincere obedience mean any thing, it must signify, either doing what you *can*, or doing what you *will.*”—I apprehend it means neither the one nor the other, but doing with uprightness *what we know God requires of us*, according to the dispensation of grace which we are under; meekly lamenting our deficiencies, and aspiring at doing all better and better every day. “*So we are (not) got upon the old swampy ground again,*” but stand upon the Rock of Ages, and there defend the law of liberty against mistaken Solifidians.

P. 27. Mr. Berridge, instead of showing, that our obedience is *insincere*, if we live in sin, and despise Christ’s salvation, goes on mowing down all sincere obedience without distinction,—“*I perceive,*” says he, “*you are not yet disposed to renounce sincere obedience;* and to engage us to it, he advances another argument, which if it were sound, would demolish, not only “*sincere obedience,*” but *true repent-*

ance, faith unfeigned, and all Christianity. To answer it therefore, I only need to produce it; substituting the words *true repentance*, or *faith unfeigned*, for "*sincere obedience*," which Mr. Berridge ridicules, thus:

"You might have reason to complain, If God had made sincere obedience," [I say, true repentance, or faith unfeigned] "*a condition of salvation: much talk of it there is, like the good man in the moon, yet none could ever ken it. I dare defy the scribes to tell me truly what sincere*" [repentance] "*is: whether it means*" leaving "*half*" my sins, "*or one fiftieth, or one hundredth part;*" shedding "*half a score of tears, or fifty, or one hundred.* I dare defy all the lawyers in the world, to tell me, whether" faith unfeigned "*means,*" believing "*half*" the Bible, "*or three quarters, or one quarter, or one fiftieth, or one hundredth part;*" Or, "*whether it means*" believing with* "*half*" a grain of the faith which removes a mountain load of guilt, "*or one fiftieth or one hundredth part*" of a grain; or whether it implies believing with all our hearts, or with "*half, or three quarters, or one quarter,*" &c. "*Where must we draw the line? It surely needs a magic wand to draw it.*" See p. 27, &c.

Mr. Berridge turns his flaming argument against sincere obedience, like the cherub's sword, *every way*. Take two more instances of his skill; still giving me leave to level at *faith unfeigned*, "*the total term of all salvation,*" what he says, against sincere obedience.—P. 28. "*If God has made sincere obedience*" [I retort, faith unfeigned] *the condition*" [or term] "*of salvation, he would certainly have drawn the line, and marked out the boundary precisely, because our life depended on it.*" —P. 28. "*Sincere obedience*" [I continue to say, faith unfeigned] "*is called a condition,*" [or a term] "*and no one knows what it is, &c. Of fine condition! Surely Satan was the author of it.*"—

P. 24. "*It is Satan's catchword for the Gospel.*"—P. 38. It is "*nothing but a jack o' lantern, dancing here and there and every where,*" &c. For p. 29, "*If God has drawn no boundary, man must draw it, and will draw it where he pleaseth. Sincere obedience*" [I still retort, sincere repentance, or true faith] "*thus becomes a nose of wax, and is so fingered as to fit exactly every human face. I look upon this doctrine as the devil's masterpiece, &c.*"

And I look upon these assertions as the masterpiece of Antinomian rashness and Geneva logic in the mouth of the pious Vicar of Ever-

* Mr. Berridge invites me *thus* to retort his bad argument against sincere obedience, p. 94, l. 18, "I have been praying fifteen years for faith with some earnestness, and am not yet possess of more than half a grain—Jesus assures you that a single grain, &c. would remove a mountain load of guilt from the conscience," &c.

ton. Is it not surprising, that he who unmasks the Christian world should be so hoodwinked by Calvinism, as not to see, that there are as many *false professors of SINCERE repentance and TRUE faith*, as there are of *sincere obedience*; that even the Turks call themselves Mussulmen, or *true believers*; and that he has full as much reason to call sincere repentance, or true faith, a *rotten buttress*, a *nose of wax*, a *paper kite*, a *jack o' lantern*, &c. as *sincere obedience*?

What a touch has this learned divine given here to the Ark of God, in order to prop up that of Calvin? And how happy is it for religion, that this grand argument against obedience, repentance, and faith, is founded upon a hypothetical proposition, p. 29. l. 8. "*If God has drawn no boundary?*" This supposition Mr. B. takes for granted, though it is evidently false; the boundaries of *sincere obedience* being full as clearly drawn in the Scriptures as those of *true repentance*, and *faith unfeigned*.

God himself, without "*a magic wand*," has "*drawn the line*," both in every man's conscience, and in his written word. The line of *Jewish obedience* is drawn all over the Old Testament, especially Exod. xx. Ps. xv. Ezek. xviii. and Mic. vi. 8. The line of *Christian obedience* is exactly drawn all over the New Testament, and most particularly in our Lord's Sermon upon the mount: and the line of *Heathen faith and obedience* is, without the Scripture, drawn in every breast, by the gracious *light that enlightens every man who comes into the world*. Through this light even Mahometans and Heathens may BELIEVE that God is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him; and by this FAITH they may work righteousness, do to others as they would be done by, and so fulfil the law of liberty, according to their dispensation: and that some do is evident from these words of the apostle: *When the Gentiles, who have not the (written) law, do by nature (in its present state of initial restoration, without any other assistance than that which divine grace vouchsafes to all men universally) the things contained in the law; these, having no (written) law, are a law unto themselves, and show the work (or precepts) of the law written in their hearts; their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing one another*, Rom. ii. 14, 15. Therefore, the dreadful blow, inadvertently struck at all religion through the side of *sincere obedience*, is happily given with a broken reed: Christianity stands: the important term of sincere obedience, with respect to adult persons, has not Satan, but God, for its author; and Antinomianism is more and more "unmasked."

But these are not all Mr. Berridge's objections against sincere obedience: For, p. 30, he says, "*If works are a condition in the Gospe*
Vol. II. 2

covenant, then works must make the *WHOLE* of it." Why so? May not faith and repentance, so long as they continue true and lively, produce good works, their proper fruit? Why must the fruit "*make the whole*" of the tree? Besides, works being the *evidencing cause* of our salvation, according to the Gospel, you have no warrant from Scripture to say, *they must make the whole cause of it*. They agree extremely well with *faith*, the *instrumental cause*; with *Christ's blood*, the *properly meritorious cause*: and with *God's mercy*, the *first moving cause*. May I not affirm, that the motion of the fourth wheel of a clock is absolutely necessary to its pointing the hour, without supposing that such a wheel *must make the whole* of the wheel-work? O how have the lean kine, ascending out of the lake of Geneva, eaten those that fed so long near the river Cam?

But you add p. 30, "*Sincere obedience, as a condition, will lead you unavoidably up to perfect obedience.*" And suppose it should, pray, where would be the misfortune? Is it right to frighten the Christian world from *sincere* obedience, by holding out to their view Christian perfection, as if it were Medusa's fearful head? Are we not commanded to *go on to perfection*? Was not this one of our Lord's complaints against the Church of Sardis—*I have not found thy works perfect before God*? Does not St. Paul sum up all the law, or all obedience, in *love*? And does not St. John make honourable mention of *perfect love*, and excite those who are *not made perfect in love*, to have *fellowship with him*? and with those who could say, *Our love is made perfect*? 1 John, iv. 17. Why then should the world be driven from *sincere*, by the help of *perfect* obedience? especially as our Lord never required *absolute* perfection from archangels, much less from fallen man? the perfection which he kindly calls us to, being nothing but a faithful improvement of our talents, according to the proportion of the grace given us, and the standard of the dispensation we are under. So that, upon this footing, he, whose one talent gains another, obeys as perfectly in his degree, as he whose five talents gain five more. Notwithstanding all the insinuations of those *fishers of men*, who beat the streams of truth, to drive the fishes from Christian perfection into the Antinomian net, God is not an austere master, much less a foolish one. He does not expect to reap where he has not sown; or to reap wheat where he sows only barley. Those gracious words of our Lord, repeated four times in the Gospel, might alone silence them that discourage believers from going on to perfection of obedience peculiar to their dispensation, *To every one that hath to purpose, shall be given, and he shall have abundance*, he shall attain the perfection of his dispensation; *but from him that hath not*, because he buries

his talent, under pretence that his Lord requires unattainable obedience, *shall be take away even that which he hath* : Compare Matt. xiii. 12. with Matt. xxv. 29. Mark iv. 24. and Luke viii. 18.

The two last arguments of Mr. Berridge against sincere obedience may be retorted thus. 1. *If faith be a condition (or term) in the Gospel covenant, then (faith) must make the whole of it.* But if this be true, what becomes of Christ's obedience unto death? You reply, Faith necessarily supposes it. But you cannot escape : I follow you step by step, and say, The works I plead for, necessarily suppose, not only our Lord's obedience unto death, but *faith*, which you call, "the only term of all salvation." 2. You say, *Sincere obedience, as a condition, will lead you unavoidably up to perfect obedience.* And I retort : Faith unfeigned, as a term or condition, will lead you unavoidably up to perfect faith : for if the law of liberty commands us to love God with all our soul, it charges us also to believe in Christ with all our heart, Acts viii. 37. Should you reply, I am not afraid of being led up to perfect faith, I return the same answer with regard to perfect obedience.

This argument against sincere obedience, taken from the danger of going on to the perfection of it, is so much the more extraordinary, when dropping from Mr. Berridge's pen, as it is demolished by the words of his mouth, when he sings,

"Thee we would be always blessing,
 "Serve thee as thine hosts above,
 "Pray and praise thee without ceasing,
 "Glory in thy perfect love.
 "Finish then thy new creation;
 "Pure and spotless may we be !
 "Triumph in thy full salvation,
 "Perfectly restor'd by thee !"

See *A Collection of Divine Songs*, by J. Berridge, M. A. &c. p. 178.

To conclude : Another argument is often urged by this pious author to render the doctrine of a believer's final justification by the evidence of works odious to humble souls. He takes it for granted that it encourages *boasting* ; still confounding the *works of faith*, which he at times recommends as well as I, with the Pharisaical *works of unbelief*, which I perpetually decry as well as he. But even this argument, about which the Calvinists make so much noise, may be retorted thus : There is as much danger of being proud of one's *faith*, as of one's *works of faith* : and if Mr. Berridge press me with Rom. iii. 27. *Boasting is excluded by the law of faith* ; I reply, that the works I plead for being the *works of faith*, his argument makes as much for me as for him : and I press him in my turn with Rom. xi. 18, 20. *Boast not thyself against*

the branches. *Thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.* Which shows it is as possible to be proud of *faith*, as of the *works of faith*. Nor can a believer boast of the latter unless his humble faith begins to degenerate into vain fancy.

Such are the capital objections that Mr. Berridge, in his unguarded zeal for the first Gospel axiom, has advanced against the second. Should he attempt to exculpate himself by saying, that all his arguments against *sincere obedience* are levelled at the *hypocritical obedience* which Pharisaic boasters sometimes call *sincere*: I reply, 1. It is a pity he never once told his readers so. 2. It is surprising that he, who *unmasks the Christian World*, should so mask himself, as to say just the reverse of what he means. 3. If he really design to attack *insincere obedience*, why does he not attack it as *insincere*? And why does he advance no arguments against it, but such as would give the deepest wound to *truly sincere obedience*, if they were conclusive? 4. What would Mr. Berridge say of me, if I published an impious essay against *divine worship* in general, and to vindicate my own conduct, gave it out some months after, that I only meant to attack the "*worship of the host*," which makes a part of what the *Papists* call "*divine worship*?" Would so lame an excuse clear me before the unprejudiced world? But, 5. The worst is, That if Calvinism be true, all Mr. Berridge's arguments are as conclusive against evangelical, sincere obedience, as against the hypocritical works of Pharisees: or, if Christians (who have time to add the *works* chiefly recommended by St. James, to the *faith* chiefly preached by St. Paul) have a *full, inamissible* title to *final* justification without those works, nay, with the most horrid works, such as adultery and murder; is it not evident that the passport of good works and *sincere obedience*, is as needless to their eternal salvation, as a rotten buttress, a paper kite, or a jack o' lantern?

SECTION IV.

WHEN Mr. Berridge grants, that "*our damnation is wholly from ourselves*," he grants that our salvation is suspended upon some term, which through grace we have power to fulfil; and in this case, *unconditional* reprobation, *absolute* election, and *finished* salvation, are false doctrines; and Calvin's whole system stands upon a sandy foundation.

WHEN a man grants me *two and two* he grants me *four*; he cannot help it. If he exclaim against me for drawing the necessary inference, he only exposes himself before men of sense. Mr. Berridge, p. 190, fully grants the second Gospel axiom: "*Our damnation,*"

says he, "*is wholly from ourselves*:" nevertheless, he declares, p. 26. that there is "*an absolute impossibility of being justified*" (or saved) "*in any manner by our works*;" and part of his book seems levelled at this proposition of the Minutes, "Salvation, not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition." Now, if I am not mistaken, by granting the above-mentioned Gospel axiom, as all moderate Calvinists do, he grants me Mr. Wesley's proposition, together with the demolition of Calvinism! For,

1. If *my damnation is wholly from myself*,* it is not the necessary consequence of an *absolute, efficacious* decree of non-election, for then my damnation would be *wholly from God*. Nor is it the *necessary* consequence of the devil's temptation, for then it would be *from the devil*: nor is it (upon the Gospel plan) the *necessary* consequence of Adam's fall; because, although I fell *seminally* into a state of damnation in the loins of Adam, yet *the free gift came* *seminally* upon me, as well as *upon all men, unto initial justification*; for I was no less in Adam, when God raised him up by the true promise of a Mediator, than when he fell by the lying promise of the tempter.

Now, if my damnation be neither from any unconditional decree of reprobation, nor from the fall of Adam, what becomes of Apollyon, and his sister, the great Diana? What becomes of *absolute* reprobation; and its inseparable companion, *unconditional* election? What becomes of all the horrors that St. Paul is supposed to father upon the God of love, Rom ix.? In a word, What becomes of Calvinism?

Again. If "*my damnation be wholly from myself*" the just Judge of all the earth must damn me personally for something, which he had put in my power personally to do or to leave undone. My damnation, then, and consequently my salvation, is necessarily suspended on some term or condition, the performance or non-performance of which is at my option. Nor is light more contrary to darkness, than these two propositions of Mr. Berridge are to each other, "*Our damnation is wholly from ourselves*:" And, "*St. Paul plainly shuts out all works of sincere obedience, as a CONDITION*" of eternal salvation. On the first stand the Minutes and the Checks; on the second Calvinism and Antinomianism. And as some of Mr. Berridge's readers cannot receive two incompatible propositions, they desire to know

* By the word *wholly*, Mr. Berridge cannot mean that our damnation may not have *secondary* causes, such as a tempting devil, an alluring world, wicked company, a bad book, &c. He is too wise to deny it. All I suppose he means, as well as myself, is, that every reprobate is the *primary*, meritorious cause of his damnation. Just as divine grace in Christ is the *primary*, meritorious cause of our salvation; although under that original principal leading cause, there are inferior, instrumental, evidencing causes, such as Bibles, ministers, religious conversation, faith, good works, &c.

which of them we must give to the winds, with the paper-kite of sincere obedience ?

I hope that gentleman will not endeavour to screen Calvinism by saying, that the reprobates are damned merely for their personal sins, and therefore *their damnation is wholly from themselves*. An illustration will easily show the fallacy of this argument, by which Calvinism is frequently kept in countenance.

A monarch, in whose dominions all children are *naturally* born lame, makes a law, that all who shall not *walk straight* before a certain day, shall be cast into a fiery furnace. The terrible day comes, and myriads of lame culprits stand before him. His anger smokes against them, and with a stretched-out arm he thunders : Depart from me, ye cursed, into that place of torment prepared for obstinate offenders ; for when I bid you walk upright, ye persisted to go lame. Go, burn to all eternity, and as ye burn, clear my justice ; and remember, that *your misery is wholly from yourselves*.

WHOLLY *from ourselves* ! they reply with one voice : was it ever in our power not to be born lame ; or to walk upright in our crippled condition ? Wast not thou acquainted with our *natural* misfortune ? When a wonderful man came into thy kingdom, to heal the lame, didst thou not order that he should pass us by ? If he and his servants have tantalized us with general offers of a free cure, dost thou not know, they were complimentary, lying offers ? Hast thou forgotten, how thou orderedst the loving Physician who wept over us, never to prepare one drop of his purple tincture for us ? And how thy “ *secret will* ” bound us with the invisible chains of an *efficacious* decree of preterition, that we might never come at that precious remedy ? In a word, was it not from the beginning thy fixed determination, that as we were born lame and helpless subjects to thy crown ; so we should remain the lame and remediless victims of thy wrath ? If therefore thou wilt show the boundless extent of thy grim sovereignty, by casting us into that flaming abyss, do it ; for we cannot resist thee ! but do not pretend that *we* have pulled down thy wrath upon us. Rob, O rob us not of the only alleviation, that our deplorable case can admit of, viz. the comfort of thinking, that our destruction is *not* from ourselves. If thou wilt be fierce as a lion, at least be not hypocritical as a crocodile.

Hear, ye Heavens, replies the absolute monarch, give ear, O Earth, and judge of the justice of my proceedings against these lame culprits. In consequence of ■ permissive, *efficacious* decree of mine five or six thousand years ago, one of their ancestors brought lameness upon himself and upon them : therefore their necessary lameness, and the

fearful destruction with which I am going to punish their lame steps, are *wholly from themselves*. Are not my ways equal, and theirs unequal? And far from being a crocodile towards them, am I not a lamb in whose mouth is no guile? Or at least a lion who, like that of the tribe of Judah, use my sovereign power only according to the clearest dictates of justice and equity?—Out of thine own mouth; reply the wretched culprits, the world of rational beings will condemn thee, thou true king of terrors! Thou acknowledgest that thousands of years before we were born, one of our ancestors brought upon us the *necessary* lameness, in consequence of which we must be cast into that fiery furnace, without having ever had it in our power to take one straight step; and yet thou sayest that our destruction is *wholly from ourselves*! If thou wert not lost to all sense of equity and regard for truth, thou wouldst say, that our condemnation is not from ourselves, but, wholly from a man whom most of us never heard of; unless thou wast the grand contriver of the fall, which brought on his lameness and ours; and in that case our destruction is far less from *him* than from *thyself*. Besides, thou hast published a decree, in which thou declarest, *They shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge: but every one shall die for his own iniquity. Behold, all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine. The soul that sinneth it shall die*, the death thou designest us. Now iniquity, that we could never personally help, an iniquity caused by one of our ancestors, can never be *our own iniquity*, contradistinguished from that of *our fathers*. If thou didst cast all the asses of thy kingdom into thy fiery furnace, because they do not bray as melodiously as the nightingale sings; or all the ravens, because they are not as white as swans; couldest thou with any truth say, *Their torments are wholly from themselves*? And hast thou any more reason to say that our perdition is from ourselves, when thou burnest us merely for our *natural, necessary* lameness, and for the lame steps that it has *naturally* and *necessarily* occasioned?

The judicious reader will enter into this illustration, without being presented with a key of my own making; and trusting his candour and good sense with that business, I draw the following inferences from the second Gospel axiom, which Mr. Berridge has explicitly granted. 1. God does not prevaricate, but speaks a melancholy truth when he says, “O Israel, *thou* hast destroyed *thyself*.” 2. Every reprobate is *his own* destroyer, not only because he has wilfully sinned away the justification mentioned Rom. v. 18, by which all infants are entitled to the kingdom of heaven, but also because he wilfully rejects the salvation *really* prepared for, and *sincerely* offered to

him in Christ. 3. According to the second covenant, we are never in a state of *personal* damnation, till we have personally buried the talent of that *grace which bringeth salvation, and hath appeared to all men*. 4. Calvinism, which teaches the reprobates fully to exculpate themselves, and justly to charge God with shuffling, lying, injustice, cruelty, and hypocrisy, is a system that does the reprobates infinite honour, and the divine perfections unspeakable injury. And, 5. When Mr. Berridge maintains, that "*our damnation is wholly from ourselves*," he maintains indirectly, that the Minutes and Checks, which necessarily stand or fall with that Gospel axiom, are truly scriptural. Thus, like other pious Calvinists,* he gives us an excel-

* The warm author of a pamphlet, entitled, "*Dr. Crisp's Ghost; or a Check upon Checks, Being a Bridle for Antinomians, and a Whip for Pelagian and Arminian Methodists*," with this motto, *Without are dogs, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie*; designed, it seems, to *whip the Arminian dogs*, and to prove that Flavel, Baxter, Williams, and I, *make a lie*, when we represent Crisp as an abettor of "*Antinomian dotages*." This warm author, I say, informs us, that even Crisp, overcome by the glaring evidence of truth, once said: "I must read the fearful doom of all, who have not learned this lesson, [*denying ungodliness*] and are not yet taught it of God, &c. They are yet in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, and have not their part in this matter. I say, as yet, this is their fearful doom, and if they continue thus untaught their lesson, there can be no salvation by grace for them. Not every one that says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doth* the will of my Father, which is in heaven, &c. Some licentious, ungodly wretches, I know, reply, though to their own ruin, &c. that Christ justifies the ungodly, and we are saved by faith without works; but alas! they observe not how cunningly the devil equivocates to lull them asleep in their ungodly practices. It is true indeed that Christ justifies the ungodly, that is, he finds them ungodly when he imputes his righteousness to them; but he does not leave them ungodly after he has inspired them: he teacheth them to deny ungodliness. He affords no cloak to perseverance in ungodliness, but will come in flaming fire, with his mighty angels, to render vengeance unto such. He that denies not ungodliness, him will Christ deny before his Father which is in heaven. Why then wilt thou be deluded with *gross sophistry*, in so clear a *sunshine* of the Gospel? Is not the light so bright that thine own heart checks thee? And if thine heart condemns thee, God is greater, and searches all things."

Hail! Crisp. Far from *checking* my *Checks*, and *whipping* the Arminian dog, in happy moment thou manfully fightest St. James's battle; thou callest the doctrine of the Checks "*sunshine*;" and *whippest* thine own speculative error out of the church as "*gross sophistry*."

Dr. Crisp, (as quoted by his opponent) almost discovered *once* the important difference between the salvation of a *sinner*, *previous* to works; and the salvation of a *believer*, *consequent* upon works.

His excellent words run thus: "It is true also, we are saved by faith without works, but here also Satan equivocates as grossly as in the other case; for though faith only saves without works efficiently, *yet not consequentially*, as I said before; that is, though faith only saves, yet that faith must not be alone that saves, but must be attended with its fruits, to wit, denying ungodliness; else it is so far from saving, that it is but a dead faith, and he is but a vain man that has no better, as St. James well affirms. The person believing must deny ungodliness, though this denial works not his salvation."—[this is very true, if it be understood either of *initial* salvation, or of the *primary cause* of eternal salvation.] "Our Saviour speaks to the same purpose, A good tree bringeth forth good fruit; He does not say

lent dose of antidote to expel Antinomian poison. But who shall recommend it to the Calvinistic world? Mr. Wesley they will not hear: My Checks they will not read. Go then, "*valiant Sergeant IF*." Thou comest from Everton, therefore thou shalt be welcome. Thou knowest the way to the closets of Solifidians: nay, thou art there already with "*The Christian World Unmasked*."

SECTION V.

MR. BERRIDGE candidly grants the *conditionality* of perseverance, and consequently of election, by showing much respect to "*Sergeant IF*," who "*guards the camp of Jesus*." But soon picking a quarrel with the valiant Sergeant, he discharges him as a Jew, opens the camp to the Antinomians by opposing to them only a sham sentinel, and shows the foundations of Calvinism in a most striking light.

THE pious author of "*The Christian World Unmasked*," speaking of the Calvinistic doctrine of *unconditional* perseverance, which he confounds with the evangelical doctrine of *conditional* perseverance, p. 194, says, with great truth, provided he had spoken of the latter: It "*affords a stable prop to upright minds, yet lends no wanton cloak to corrupt hearts. It brings a cordial to revive the faint, and keeps a guard to check the forward. The guard attending on this doctrine is Sergeant IF; low in stature, but lofty in significance; a very valiant guard, though a monosyllable. Kind notice has been taken of the Sergeant by Jesus Christ and his apostles; and*

the fruit makes it a good tree, yet the good fruit is inseparable. I speak not of quantities or degrees, &c. but of the truth, to wit, a *real and sincere denial of ungodliness*."—Excellent! To whip the dogs, the Rev. Mr. P———l need only prove, that when David robbed Uriah of the ewe-lamb that lay in his bosom, tried to kill his soul with drunkenness, and treacherously killed his body with the sword of the Ammonites, he "*really and sincerely denied ungodliness*." And that his faith produced the *good fruit*, which is *INSEPARABLE* from saving faith. The moment this is done, I promise the public to clear pious Calvinists in general from the charge of *speculative Antinomianism*, Dr. Crisp in particular, from that of *glaring contradiction*, and his zealous second, who accuses me with "*gross falsities*," from Calvinistic rashness.

We can no more exculpate warm Calvinists, when they betray holiness into the hands of practical Antinomians, because they now and then speak honourably of good works; than we can clear Pontius Pilate, from the guilt of delivering the Messiah to the Jews, because he once solemnly "*took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I find no fault in this just person; I am innocent of his blood: See ye to it*." If the author of the *Whip for the Arminians* consider this, or if he turn to Check IV. p. 279. where I produce D. Williams's observation concerning Crisp's *inconsistency*, he will be probably less forward in *checking Checks*, that he has not *candidly* considered; and in making *whips* for the backs of his honest neighbours, lest some of them should take them from him to lash his mistakes and chastise his precipitation.

much respect is due unto him from all the Lord's recruiting officers, and every soldier in his army. Pray listen to the Serjeant's speech : *IF ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed*, John viii. 31. *IF ye do these things, ye shall never fall*, 2 Pet. i. 10. *IF what ye have heard shall abide in you, ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father*, 1 John ii. 24. *We are made partakers of Christ, IF we hold steadfast unto the end*, Heb. xiii. 14. *Whoso looketh and continueth* (that is, *IF he that looketh doth continue*) *in the perfect law of liberty, that man shall be blessed in his deed*, James i. 25."—And again, p. 194, "IF backsliders fancy, they must all be restored by repentance, because David was restored, and Peter was ; they might as well suppose, they must all be translated into heaven without dying,* because Enoch and Elijah were." p. 199, l. 17.

Upon this plan of doctrine, we are ready to lay by our controversial pens, and shake hands with our Calvinist brethren. All that we desire of them, in order to a lasting agreement, is—1. To consider what is implied in the preceding concessions ; and not to gag Sergeant IF, when he honestly speaks the very words of the *Captain of our Salvation*, or those of the apostles, his lieutenant-generals :—2. Not to call him a *Galatian*, or a *Papist*, when he is found in company with St. James.—3. Not to enter an action against him, for disturbing the peace of those backsliders, who having denied the faith, and lost their first love, now quietly hug ■ bosom sin, or take their Laodicean rest on the pillow of *self-election* :—4. Not to put him under arrest, for heading a platoon of those, whom some of the elect call *diabolonians*, because they *doubt* the truth of *unconditional* election, or election without IF ; and choose to fire at *sin*, rather than at their *captain*.—And 5. not to say to him, Hail ! Sergeant, kissing him as if he were ■ good Christian, in order to betray him with some decency into the hands of the Antinomians, as " a circumcised caitiff."

Whether my pious opponent has not treated the honest Sergeant in that manner, I leave the candid reader to determine. " Yet take notice," [says he, p. 194.] " that Sergeant IF is not of Jewish, but Christian parentage ; not sprung from Levi, though a son of Abraham ; no sentinel of Moses, but a watchman for the camp of Jesus. He wears no dripping beard, like the circumcised race ; and is no legal blustering *condition* to purchase man's salvation, but a modest Gos-

* Here Mr. Berridge, in a fit of legality, far exceeds the limits of the truth which I maintain in the Checks ; for he insinuates, that the recovery of backsliders is as improbable as their bodily translation into heaven. For my part, severe as I am represented to backsliders, I believe their return is ten thousand times more probable than their going to heaven as Enoch and Elijah did.

pel evidence to prove the truth of grace. He tells no idle tales."—Enough, Sir, if "*he tell no idle tales,*" he does not cavil and quibble, much less does he deny his proper name, and well-known meaning. Although he no more dreams of "*purchasing man's salvation,*" than you do, yet he is conditional IF,—Sergeant IF,—a very valiant guard to the Scriptural doctrine of perseverance, and an irreconcilable enemy to Calvinian election, and "*Antinomian dotages.*"

O ye opposers of the second Gospel axiom, "*Pray come and peep!*" See Calvinism "*unmasked*" by one of your principal leaders, who shows to the world the futile foundation of your doctrine of grace! Thanks be to his humorous honesty, we see now that those famous doctrines stand upon the super-metaphysical difference there is between IF, and IF ;—between Jewish IF, and Christian IF ;—legal IF, and evangelical IF ;—IF at Madeley, and IF at Everton. When IF, the culprit, appears in the Foundry pulpit, *he tells idle tales*, it seems! he slyly disguises himself! But when IF, the orthodox, shows himself in the desk at Everton, (for it is to be feared, that he seldom appears in the pulpit *valiantly to guard Bible perseverance*) he never equivocates! When he says to people that never stood, or to people that can never fall, *IF ye do these things, ye shall never fall, &c.* he is not a condition, and yet he never shuffles! These are strange hints indeed!

Patient Reader, permit me to try, by the following questions, the solidity of the Calvinistic distinction between IF and IF, which supports the amazing weight of the great Diana. 1. When the Gospel said to David, *IF thou dost these things thou shalt never fall*, and he fell into adultery: was Sergeant IF a MODEST Gospel evidence to prove the truth of his grace? And supposing he was such a modest evidence, did he "*lend no wanton cloak to a corrupt heart?*"—2. When our Lord said to the young ruler, *IF thou wilt be perfect, sell all*; was Sergeant IF of Jewish or Christian parentage?—3. How shall I know when the Sergeant is "*a sentinel of Moses,*" or when he is "*a watchman for the camp of Jesus?*" Should you answer, *A Jewish IF wears a dripping beard*, you may indeed by such an argument convince, and entertain some Calvinists; but you leave me quite in the dark; and with some very honest folks, who are cast in a Gospel foundery, instead of "*ringing a fire-bell,*" I smile at your wit and orthodoxy, but can no more understand what you mean by an IF, "*with a dripping beard,*" than you could conceive what I would be at, if I spoke of a Yes, with a long tail, or a Perhaps, with dreadful horns!—How shall I distinguish a "*legal*" from an evangelical IF? Should you say, that the "*legal, blustering*" Sergeant wears a halberd, but the evangelical, mild IF, has no weapon at all: I ask, What business has an unarmed IF in "the

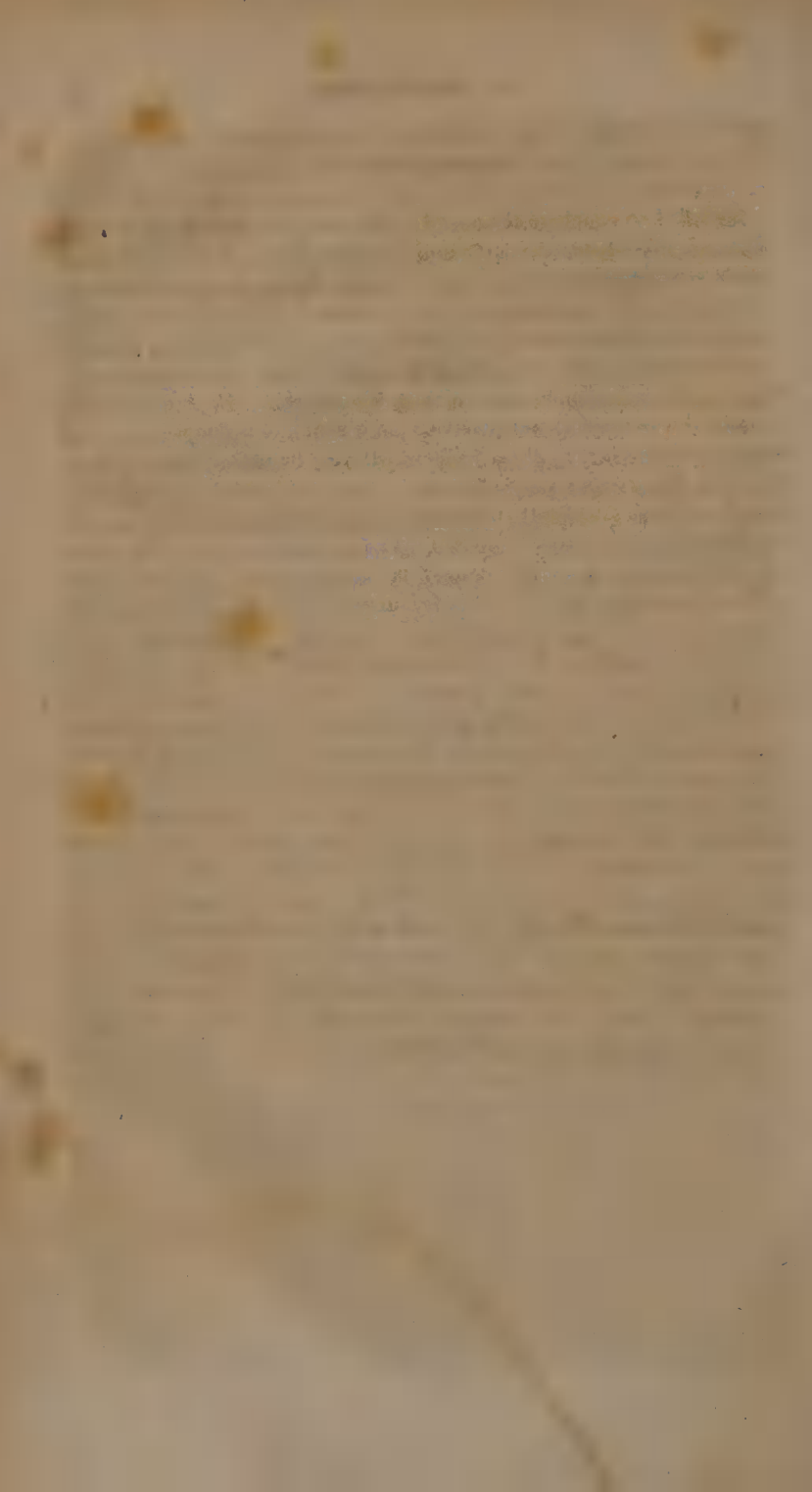
camp of Jesus?" Why do you call him *Sergeant*? Is he not a *sham sentinel*, ■ ridiculous scarecrow, to deceive the simple, rather than "a very valiant guard to check the forward?"—5. How shall I make a difference between an Everton IF, and a Madeley IF? When I have read my Bible in both places, I have always found the Sergeant exactly of the same stature: he always appeared in the same black regimentals: and to this day a Madeley IF exactly answers to the description that the pious Vicar of Everton gives of him. He is "a monosyllable, low in stature, but lofty in significance:" Whereas the Everton IF is yet lower in significance than in stature, since you make him signify just nothing. Should you reply, that a Madeley IF is "like one of the circumcised race;" I answer, that although about eleven years ago I circumcised him with an Antinomian knife, yet I did not quite mutilate him. But I could name a Gospel minister, who has "served more than three apprenticeships at ■ noted hall of physic," by whom the unhappy Sergeant has not only been "circumcised," but quite emasculated, yea, deprived of his very vitals. For when IF, in the above-quoted scriptures, is absolutely divested of conditionality, and turned into an unnecessary evidence of grace, which the elect can do without, as well as David and Solomon; may it not be compared to a dead Sergeant, whose lungs and heart are pulled out: and whose ill-smelling remains, far from being a "valiant guard" against the forward, prove an enticing lure to unclean birds, who fly about in search of a carcass.

Excuse, reader, this prolix and ludicrous defence of the Sergeant. The subject, though treated in so queer a manner, is of the utmost importance; for the Minutes, the Checks, and the second Gospel axiom, stand or fall with Sergeant IF. If he is a coward, a knave, or a cipher, Antinomianism will still prevail; but if he recover his true and lofty significance, he will soon rid the church of Antinomian dotages. As "much respect is due unto him," and to St. James's undefiled religion, which the ingenious book I quote indirectly undermines, I thought it my duty to "open my bag" also, and let out a ferret, or to speak exactly the language of Everton, "a fox," to chase "a straggling goose hard at hand." Take notice, however, that by the "goose," I do not mean the reverend author of *The World Unmasked*, for he has wit enough, and to spare; but the "waddling dame," Calvinistic contradiction, alias *Logica Genevensis*. And now reader, I lay her before thee, not to make thee "sup" upon her "amidst a deal of cackling music," but that thou wouldest help me to nail her up to the everlasting doors of the temple of truth, as sportsmen do cranes and foxes to the doors of their rural buildings.

CONCLUSION.

WERE I to conclude these strictures upon the dangerous tenets, inadvertently advanced, and happily contradicted, in *The Christian World Unmasked*, without professing my brotherly love and sincere respect for the ingenious and pious author, I should wrong him, myself, and the cause which I defend. I only do him justice when I say, that few, very few of our elders, equal him in devotedness to Christ, zeal, diligence, and ministerial success. His indefatigable labours in the word and doctrine entitle him to a double share of honour; and I invite all my readers with me to *esteem him highly in love for his Master's and his work's sake*: entreating them not to undervalue his vital piety, on account of his Antinomian opinion; and beseeching them to consider, that his errors are so much the more excusable as they do not influence his moral conduct, and he refutes them himself, far more than his favourite scheme of doctrine allows him to do. Add to this, that those very errors spring in a great degree from the idea, that he honours Christ by receiving, and does God service by propagating them.

The desire of catching the attention of his readers, has made him choose a witty, facetious manner of writing, for which he has a peculiar turn; and the necessity I am under of standing his *indirect* attack, obliges me to meet him upon his own ground, and to encounter him with his own weapons. I beg, that what passes for evangelical humour in him, may not be called indecent levity in me. A sharp pen may be guided by a kind heart; and such, I am persuaded, is that of my much-esteemed antagonist, whom I publicly invite to my pulpit; protesting that I should be edified, and overjoyed, to hear him enforce there the *guarded* substance of his book, which, notwithstanding the vein of Solitudinism I have taken the liberty to open, contains many great and glorious truths.



THE
FICTITIOUS AND THE GENUINE
CREED:

BEING

“A CREED FOR ARMINIANS,”

COMPOSED

BY RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

TO WHICH IS OPPOSED,

A CREED

FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT

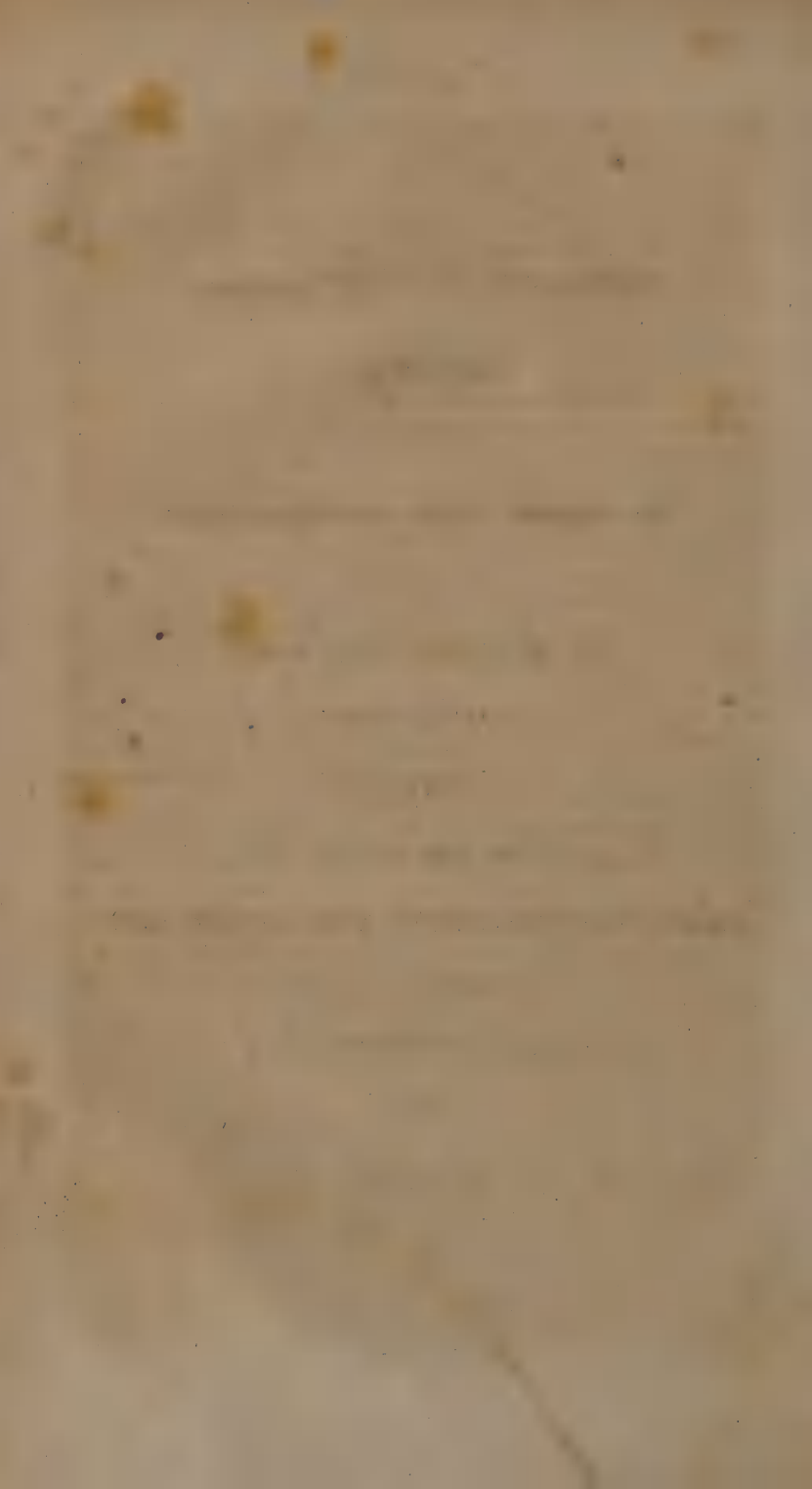
CHRIST TASTED DEATH FOR EVERY MAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE

CHECKS TO ANTINOMIANISM.



In doctrine show uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed.—Tit. ii. 7, 8.



PREFACE.

In which the Author gives an account of Mr. Hill's new method of attack, and makes some reconciling concessions to the Calvinists, by means of which their strongest arguments are unnerved, and all that is truly scriptural in Calvinism is openly adopted into the anti-Calvinian doctrine of grace.

WE should be deservedly considered as *bad Protestants*, if we were not ready always to give an answer with meekness to every man [much more to Mr. Hill, a gentleman of piety, learning, reputation, wit, and fortune,] who asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. We confess, that after the way which our opponents call the heresy of the *Arminians* and *Perfectionists*, we worship the God of our fathers; believing what is written in the Scriptures concerning the extent of redemption *by price* and *by power*.

Concerning the extent of Christ's redemption *by price* we believe, that he, *by the grace of God*, tasted death to procure initial salvation for every man, and eternal salvation for them that obey him: and concerning the extent of his redemption *by power*, we are persuaded, that, when we come to God by him, he is able and willing to save to the uttermost our souls from the guilt and pollution of sin *here*, and our bodies from the grave, and from corruption *hereafter*.

With regard to our extensive views of Christ's redemption by price, Mr. Hill calls us *Arminians*; and with respect to our believing, that there is no perfect faith, no perfect repentance in the grave; that the Christian graces of repentance, faith, hope, patience, &c. must be perfected here or never; and with respect to our confidence that Christ's blood, fully applied by his Spirit, and apprehended by perfect faith, can cleanse our hearts from all unrighteousness before we go into the purgatory of the *Calvinists*, or into that of the *Papists*, that is, before we go into the valley of the shadow of death, or into the suburbs of hell;—with respect to this *belief* and *confidence*, I say, Mr. Hill calls us *Perfectionists*; and appearing once more upon the

stage of our controversy, he has lately presented the public with what he calls, "*A Creed for Arminians and Perfectionists*," which he introduces in these words: "The following confession of faith, however shocking, not to say blasphemous, it may appear to the humble Christian, must inevitably be adopted, if not in express words, yet in substance, by every Arminian and Perfectionist whatsoever; though the last article chiefly concerns such as are ordained ministers in the Church of England." And as among such ministers, Mr. J. Wesley, Mr. W. Sellon, and myself, peculiarly oppose Mr. Hill's Calvinian doctrines of *absolute election* and *reprobation*, and of a *death-purgatory*; he has put the initial letters of our names to his Creed; hoping, no doubt, to make us peculiarly ashamed of our principles. And indeed so should we be, if any "*blasphemous*" or "*shocking*" consequence "*inevitably*" flowed from them.

But how has Mr. Hill proved that this is the case? Has he supported his charge by one argument? No: but among some consequences of our doctrine, which are quite harmless and scriptural, he has fixed upon us some shocking consequences, which have no *necessary* connexion with *any* of our doctrines of grace. We apprehend, therefore, that by this method, Mr. Hill has exposed his inattention more than our "*heresy*."

If Mr. Hill had said before a thousand witnesses, I hold *ten* guineas in my *right* hand, and *ten* in my left, could the author of the Checks wrong him, or expose his own candour, if he insisted upon the truth of this consequence, "Then Mr. Hill holds *twenty* guineas in *both* his hands." And if Mr. Hill protested ever so long, that he holds but *fifteen* in all, and that I am a "*culumniator*" for saying that he holds *twenty*; would not all the witnesses, who are impartial, and acquainted with the proportion of numbers, clear me of the charge of *calumny*, and accuse Mr. Hill of *inattention*? Again: If I had said before the same witnesses, that I have *two* guineas in my right hand, and *two* in my left; and if Mr. Hill, to keep his error in countenance by bringing me in guilty of as great a mistake as his own, fixed the following consequence upon my assertions, "Then you hold *seven* guineas in *both* your hands;" would he not expose himself more than me? And would not all the candid spectators declare, that although I have a right to maintain that *ten* and *ten* make *twenty*, my opponent cannot reasonably assert that *two* and *two* make *seven*. The justness of this illustration will appear to the reader, if he cast a look upon the Creed which I have composed for an Antinomian with Mr. Hill's principles. The doctrines that it contains are all his own, and they are expressed chiefly in his own words, as appears from numerous

quotations, in which I refer the reader to the pages where he has publicly maintained the tenets which I expose : but Mr. Hill has not produced in his Arminian Creed one line out of my Checks from which any shocking or blasphemous doctrine flows by “*unavoidable*” consequence. If he had, I protest, as a lover of truth, that I would instantly renounce the principle, on which such a doctrine might be *justly* fathered ; being persuaded that the pure light of a pure doctrine, can never be *necessarily* productive of gross darkness : although it may *accidentally* be obscured by occasional difficulties, as the sun may be darkened by interposing clouds.

Some readers will probably think, that I have made the Calvinists too many concessions in the following pages : but I am persuaded that I have granted them nothing but what they have a scriptural right to : and God forbid that any Protestant should grant them less !—At the Synod of Dort, the Arminians, being sensible that a *gratuitous election* can be defended by reason and Scripture, would debate first the doctrine of *gratuitous*, *Calvinian reprobation*, which is flatly contrary to reason and Scripture. The Calvinists, on the other hand, being conscious that the strength of their cause lay in maintaining a *gratuitous election*, and hoping that the *gratuitous reprobation* would naturally skulk under that election, insisted that the doctrine of election should be debated first. The Arminians would not consent to it, so that nothing was properly discussed : and the Calvinists having numbers and the sword on their side, deposed their opponents as obstinate heretics. Whilst we disapprove the severity of the Calvinists, we blame the Arminians for provoking that severity by refusing to clear up the doctrine of election. And improving by the mistakes of both parties, we make the reconciling concessions which follow.

1. We grant that there is an *election of distinguishing grace* ; but we show that this election is not Calvinian election ; thousands being partakers of the *partial election of distinguishing grace*, who have no share in the *impartial election of distributive justice* ; two distinct elections these, the confounding of which has laid the foundation of numberless errors. See *Scripture Scales*, Sect. XII.

2. We grant the Calvinists that *initial salvation* is merely by a decree of Divine grace through Jesus Christ. But we assert that *eternal salvation* is both by a decree of Divine grace and of distributive justice ; God *rewarding* in Christ with an eternal life of glory those believers, who, *by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour and immortality*.

3. We grant, that although God, as a judge, is no respecter of persons ; yet, as a benefactor, he is, and of consequence has a right to be, so far

a *respector of persons*, as to bestow his *favours* in various degrees upon his creatures ; dealing them to some with a *more sparing* hand than he does to others :

4. We grant that although God punishes no one with eternal death for *original* and *necessary* sin ; yet when sin, which *might have been avoided* by the help of creating or of redeeming grace, has been *voluntarily* and *personally* committed : God does punish (and of consequence has a right to punish) with eternal death, *some* offenders *more quickly* than he does *others* ; his showing, in such a case, mercy and justice *upon Gospel terms* to whom he pleases, and as soon or late as he pleases, being undoubtedly the privilege of his sovereign goodness or justice. An awful privilege this, which is perfectly agreeable to the evangelical law of liberty, and with which the Calvinists have absurdly built their *twin* doctrines of *finished salvation* and *finished damnation* ; not considering that such doctrines stain the first Gospel axiom, and totally destroy the second.

The nature of this concession may be illustrated by an example. Two unconverted soldiers march up to the enemy. Both have avoidably transgressed the third commandment : the one by calling *fifty* times for his damnation : and the other *five hundred* times. Now, both have *personally* forfeited their initial salvation, and continuing impenitent, God, as a righteous revenger of profaneness, may justly suffer the *fifty pence debtor* to fall in the battle, and to be instantly hurried to the damnation he had madly prayed for : and, as a long-suffering, merciful Creator, he may suffer the *five hundred pence debtor*, I mean the soldier who has sinned with a higher hand, to walk out of the field unhurt, and to be spared for years ; following him still with new offers of mercy, which the wretch is so happy as to embrace at last. Here is evidently a higher degree of the distinguishing grace which was manifested towards Manasses, as it has also been to many other grievous sinners. But by this *peculiar* favour God violates no promise, and he acts in perfect consistency with himself : for, when two people have *personally* forfeited their eternal salvation by one avoidable sin, of which they do not repent when they might ; he does no *injustice* to the fifty pence debtor, when he calls him *first* to an account ; and he greatly magnifies his *long-suffering*, when he continues to relieve the five hundred pence debtor.

By this *sparing* use of astonishing mercy, God strongly guards the riches of his grace. This *inferior* degree of forbearance makes thoughtful sinners stand in awe ; as not knowing but the first sin they shall commit, will actually fill up the measure of their iniquities, and provoke the Almighty to swear in his righteous anger, that their day

of grace is ended. To justify therefore God's conduct towards men in this respect, we need only observe, that, if *distinguishing grace* did not make the difference which we grant to the Calvinists, perverse free will would draw amazing strength from the unwearied patience of free grace. Suppose, for instance, that God had *ensured* to all men a day of grace of *fourscore* years, would not all sinners think it time enough to repent at the age of threescore years and nineteen? Therefore, through the clouds of darkness which surround us, reason sees far into the propriety of the partiality with which distinguishing grace dispenses its *superior* blessings. But all the partiality which that grace ever displayed, never amounted to one single grain of Calvinian reprobation. Because God, as a righteous judge, lets every man have a fair trial for his life. Nor will all the sophisms in the world reconcile the ideas, which the Scriptures and rectified reason give us of divine justice, with a doctrine which represents God as condemning to eternal torments a majority of men, for the necessary, unavoidable consequences of Adam's sin:—A sin this, which, upon the scheme of the absolute predestination of all events, was also made unavoidable and necessary. To return :

5. We grant that although Christ died to purchase a day of [initial] *salvation* for all men, yet he never died to purchase ETERNAL salvation for any *adults*, but *them that believe, obey, and are faithful unto death*. And, that of consequence, the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ is *general and unconditional* with respect to INITIAL salvation; but *particular and conditional* with respect to ETERNAL salvation; except in the case of infants, who die before actual sin. These, and only these, are blessed with *unconditional election* and *finished salvation* in the Calvinistical sense of these phrases:—These are *irresistibly* saved and eternally admitted into one of the many mansions of our heavenly Father's house. Free grace, to the honour of our Lord's meritorious infancy, absolutely saves them without any concurrence of their free will. Nor is it surprising, that God should do it *unavoidably*; for as they never were *personally* capable of *working* WITH free grace, i. e. of *working out their salvation*; so they never were in a capacity of *working* AGAINST free grace, or of *beginning* to work their damnation. Having never committed an act of sin, God can consistently with the Gospel, save them eternally without any act of repentance. In a word, infants having *no unrighteousness* but that of the *first Adam*, reason, as well as Scripture, dictates that they need *no righteousness* but that of the *second Adam*.

6. From the preceding concession it follows, that obedient, persevering believers are God's *elect* in the particular and full sense of

the word: being *elected* to the *reward* of eternal life in glory:—A reward this, from which they who die in a state of apostacy or impenitency have cut themselves off, by not making their calling and conditional election sure.

7. We grant, that none of *these peculiar elect* shall ever perish, though they would have perished had they not been faithful unto death: and we allow, that with respect to God's *foreknowledge* and *omniscience*, their number is *certain*. But we steadily assert that, with regard to the doctrines of general redemption, of God's covenanted mercy, of man's free agency, of divine justice, and of a day in which the Lord will *judge the world in righteousness*: we steadily assert, I say, with regard to these doctrines, the number of the *peculiar elect* might be greater or less, without the least exertion of *forcible grace*, or of *forcible wrath*. For it might be *greater*, if more *wicked and slothful servants* improved instead of burying their talents: And it might be *less*, if more *good and faithful servants* grew *faint in their minds*, and *drew back to perdition* before they had *fought their good fight out, kept the faith, and finished their course*.

8. And lastly, we grant, that, according to the election of distinguishing grace, which is the basis of the various dispensations of divine grace towards the children of men, Christ died to purchase *more privileges* for the Christian Church than for the Jews, *more* for the Jews than for the Gentiles, and *more* for *some* Gentiles than for others: for it is indubitable that God, as a sovereign Benefactor, may, without shadow of injustice, dispense his favours spiritual and temporal as he pleases: it being enough for the display of his goodness, and for the exciting of our gratitude, 1. That the *least* of his *heathen* servants had received ■ talent, with means, capacities, and opportunities of improving it, even to everlasting happiness: 2. That God never desires to reap where he does not sow, nor to reap a hundred measures of spiritual wheat, where he only sows a handful of spiritual barley: and, 3. That the least degree of his improveable goodness is a seed, which nothing but our *avoidable* unfaithfulness hinders from bringing forth fruit to eternal life in glory.

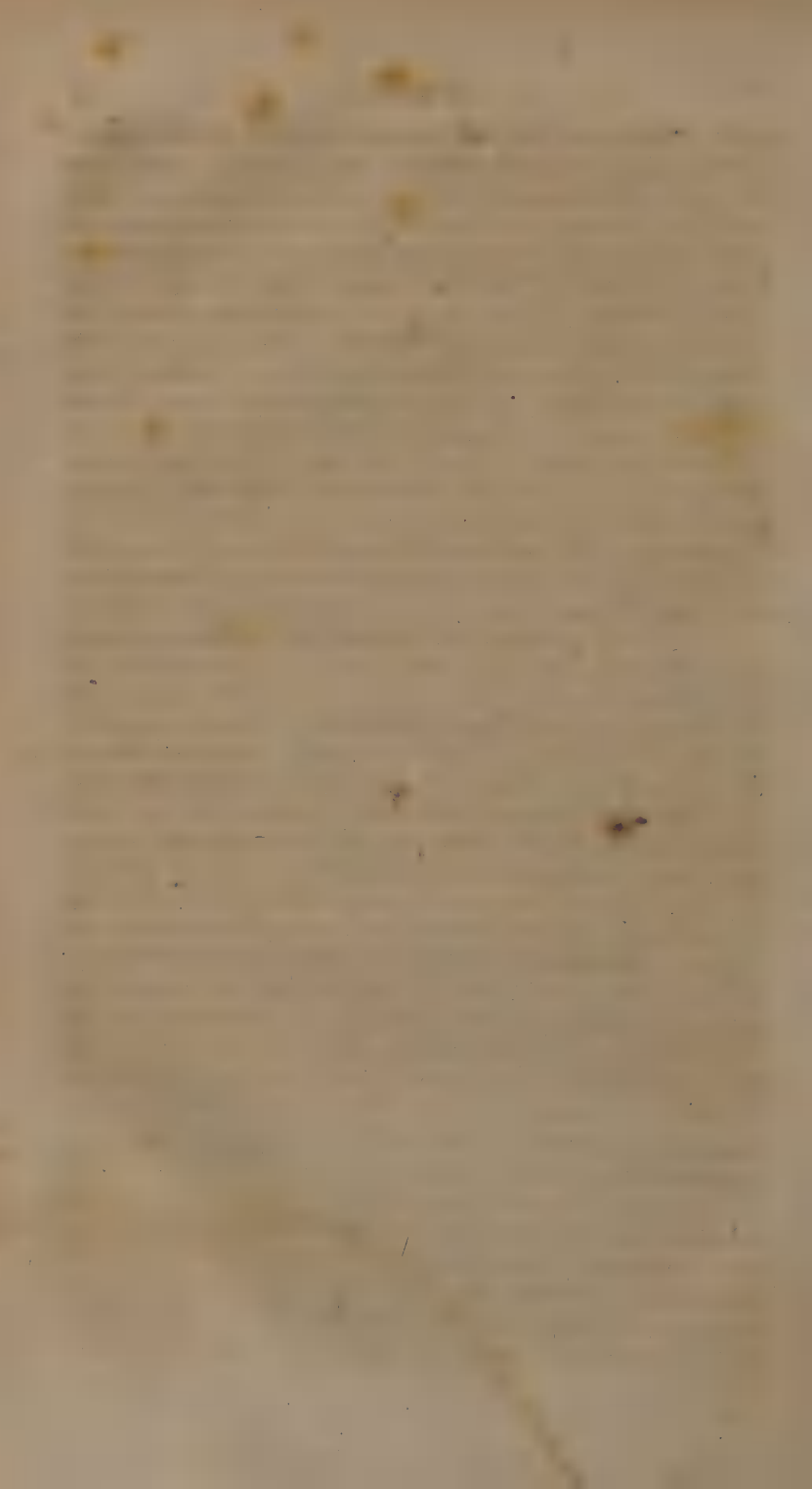
By making these guarded concessions, I conceive, we rectify the mistakes of Arminius; we secure the doctrine of grace in all its branches, whilst Calvinism secures only the *irresistible* grace, by which infants and complete idiots are eternally saved; we turn the edge, and break the point of all the arguments by which the Calvinian doctrines of grace are defended; and tear in pieces the cloak with which the Antinomians cover their dangerous error.

Had Arminius, and all the ancient and modern Semi-Pelagians, granted to their opponents what we grant to ours, Calvinism would never have risen to its tremendous height. If you try to stop a great river, refusing it the liberty to flow in the deep channel which nature has assigned it, you only make it foam, rise, rage, overflow its banks, and carry devastation far and near. The only way to make judicious Calvinists allow us the *impartial remunerative* election, and the *general* redemption, which the Gospel displays, is to allow them with a good grace, the *partial, gratuitous* election, and the *particular* redemption, which the Scripture strongly maintain also. See the *Scales*, Sect. XI. XII. XIII. For my part, I glory in going as near the Calvinists as I *safely* can. Zelotes is my brother as well as Honestus; and so long as I do not lose firm footing upon Scripture-ground, I gladly stretch my *right* hand to *him*, and my left hand to his antagonist; endeavouring to help them both out of the opposite ditches, which bound the narrow way, where Truth frequently takes a solitary walk.

I conclude this introduction by thanking Mr. Hill for coming a little closer to the knot of the controversy in his *Fictitious Creed*, than he has done in his *Finishing Stroke*; for by this mean he has stirred me up to dig deeper into the Scriptures—those inexhaustible mines of truth, which God has set before us. I would not intimate that I have dug out *new* gold. No: the oracles of God are not new; but I hope that I have separated a little dross from some of the richest pieces of golden ore, which the Arminians and the Calvinists have dug out of those mines: and I flatter myself that the judicious and unprejudiced will confess, that some of those pieces which Calvinian and Arminian bigots have thrown away as lumps of dross or of arsenic, contain nevertheless truths more precious than thousands of gold and silver. Should these sheets in any degree remove the prejudice of professors, and prepare them for a reconciliation upon the Scriptural plan of the doctrines of *Grace* and *Justice*, or of the two Gospel-axioms, I shall humbly rejoice and thankfully give God the glory.

MADELEY,
Dec. 14, 1774.

JOHN FLETCHER.



THE
FICTITIOUS AND THE GENUINE
CREED.

—○○○○—
THE FICTITIOUS CREED,

BEING A CREED FOR ARMINIANS.

Composed by RICHARD HILL, Esq. and published at the end of his
“ Three Letters written to the Rev. J. FLETCHER, Vicar of
Madeley.”

ARTICLE I.

“ I BELIEVE that Jesus Christ died for the whole human race, and that he had no more love towards those who now are, or hereafter shall be in glory, than for those who now are, or hereafter shall be lifting up their eyes in torments ; and that the one are no more indebted to his grace than the other.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

Being an Anti-Calvinian CONFESSION of FAITH, for those who believe that *Christ tasted death for every man* ; and that some men, by denying the Lord that bought them, bring upon themselves swift destruction.

ARTICLE I.

WE believe that Jesus Christ died for the whole human race, with an intention first, to procure *absolutely* and *unconditionally* a *temporary* redemption, or an *initial* salvation for all men universally : and secondly, to procure a *particular* redemption, or an *eternal* salvation *conditionally* for all men, but *absolutely* for all that die in their

infancy, and for all the adult who *obey him*, and are *faithful unto death*.

We believe that, in consequence of the *general* and *temporary* redemption procured by Christ for all mankind, every man is unconditionally blessed with a day of grace, which the Scripture calls *the accepted time*, and *the day of salvation*. During this day [under various dispensations of grace, and by virtue of various covenants made through Christ,—David,—Moses,—Abraham,—Noah,—or Adam] God, for Christ's sake, affords all men proper means, abilities, and opportunities to *work out their own salvation*, or to make their *calling and CONDITIONAL election* to the ETERNAL blessings of their respective dispensations *sure*; and as many do it, by keeping *the free gift which is come unto all men*, or by recovering it through faithful obedience to *reconverting grace*: or, in other terms, as many as *know*, and perseveringly improve, *the day of their visitation*, are in consequence of Christ's particular redemption, entitled to an *eternal* redemption or salvation: that is, they are *eternally* redeemed from hell, and *eternally* saved into different degrees of heavenly glory, according to the different degrees of their faithfulness, and the various dispensations which they were under. While they that bury their talents, and *know not* [i. e. squander away] *the day of their visitation*, forfeit their initial salvation, and secure to themselves God's *judicial* reprobation, together with all its terrible consequences.

We believe moreover, that, although Christ *tasted death for every man*, yet, according to his covenants of peculiarity or distinguishing grace, he formerly showed more love to the Jews than to the Gentiles, and now shows more favour to the Christians than to the Jews, and to *some* Christians than to others; bestowing more spiritual blessings upon the Protestants than upon the Papists,—more temporal mercies upon the English than upon the Greenlanders, &c. We farther believe, that this *special* favour is not only *national*, but also in some cases *personal*: thus it seems that God showed more of it to Jacob than to Esau;—to Esau, than to Shechem; to David and Solomon, than to Jonathan and Mephibosheth; to St. Paul than to Apollos; and to Peter, James, and John, than to Judas, Bartholomew, and Matthias.—We likewise believe, that God [according to his *prescience*] has a regard for the souls, who [he foresees] *will* finally yield to his grace; and this regard he has not for those souls, who [he foresees] *will* finally harden themselves against his goodness. Thus *with respect* to divine *foreknowledge*, we grant, that Christ had a respect for fallen Peter, which he had not for fallen Judas: for when they were both lying in the guilt of their crimes, he could not but prefer

him who had not yet sinned out his day of grace, to him who had :— him who had done the Spirit of grace a *partial, temporary* despite, to him who had done that Spirit a *total and final* despite. And, in a word, him who *would* repent, to him who absolutely *would not*. However, this peculiar regard for some men, this lengthening or shortening a sinner's day of grace arbitrarily, and this bestowing more talents, i. e. more temporal and spiritual blessings upon one man than upon another, according to the sovereign prerogative, which God claims in his covenants of peculiarity :—This peculiar regard for some men, I say, never amounts to a grain of partiality in judgment : much less to a rape committed by overbearing grace, or inflexible wrath, upon the moral agency of two men (suppose Peter and Judas) to bring about, in an *unavoidable* manner, the *final perseverance* of the one, and the *final apostacy* of the other. For, had the covetous traitor humbly repented when he could have done it, he yet would have gone to heaven ; and had the lying, perjured apostle, put off his repentance as obstinately as Judas did, he would have gone to the place of impenitent apostates : for, God having *put life and death before* the sons of men ; and having appointed eternal rewards for those who *finally choose life* in the rectitude of their conduct, and eternal punishments for those who *finally choose death in the error of their ways*, he can no more *finally* turn the scale of their will, than he can *deny himself*, and turn the solemnity of the great day into the pageantry of a Pharisaic masquerade.

The end of the first article of Mr. Hill's Fictitious Creed, is not less contrary to *all* our principles, than the middle part. For, according to all our doctrines of grace, persons who are in glory like Peter, are infinitely more indebted to Christ's grace, than persons who lift up their eyes in torments like Judas. This will appear if we consider the case of those two apostles. Although they were both equally indebted to Christ for his redeeming love, which put them in a state of initial salvation ; and for his *distinguishing favour*, which raised them to apostolic honours ; yet upon our scheme, Peter is *infinitely more* beholden to free grace than Judas ; and I prove it thus : Christ, according to his *remunerative* election, which draws after it a *particular* redemption, and *eternal* salvation :—Christ, I say, according to that remunerative election, has chosen Peter to the *reward* of a heavenly throne and a crown of glory. Now this election, in which Judas has no interest, springs from God's *free grace*, as well as from voluntary perseverance in the free obedience of faith. It was of *free grace* that God designed to give to all penitent, persevering believers, and of consequence to Peter, a crown of glory in his hea-

venly kingdom : for he might have given them only the conveniences of life in a cottage on earth :—he might have dropped them into their original nothingness, after having blessed them with one single smile of his approbation :—nay, he might have demanded their utmost obedience, without promising them the least reward. Therefore Peter, and all the saints in glory, are indebted to Christ, not only for their rewards of additional grace on earth, but also for *all* their *eternal* salvation, and for *all* the heavenly blessings which flow from their *particular* redemption. *Infinitely* gracious rewards these, which God does not bestow upon Judas, nor upon any of those who die impenitent ! *Infinitely* glorious rewards ! which nothing but God's *free* grace in Christ, could move his distributive justice to bestow upon persevering believers. Hence it is evident, that Mr. Hill has tried to make our fundamental doctrine of *general redemption* appear ridiculous, by absurdly clogging it with an odious consequence, which has no more to do with that comfortable doctrine, than we have to do with Mr. Hill's uncomfortable tenet of *absolute reprobation*.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE II.

“ I BELIEVE that Divine grace is indiscriminately given to all men ; and that God, foreseeing that by far the greater part of the world will reject his grace, doth nevertheless bestow it upon them in order to heighten their torments, and to increase their damnation in hell.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE II.

We do not believe that Divine grace is *indiscriminately* given to all men. For although we assert, that God gives to all at least *one* talent of *true* grace to profit with ; yet we acknowledge, that he makes as real a difference between *man* and *man*, as between an *angel* and an *archangel*, giving to some men *one* talent, to others *two* talents, and to others *five*, according to the election of *distinguishing* grace maintained in the Scripture Scales, Sect. XII. But the least talent of grace is saving, if free will do not bury it to the last.

And we believe, that, although God foresaw that in some unhappy periods of the world's duration, the greater part of *adults* would *reject* his grace, he nevertheless bestows it in different measures upon all :

but not (as Mr. Hill says) “*in order to heighten the torments, and increase the damnation of any in hell.*” This is a horrid conceit, which we return to those who insinuate, that God gives *common grace* [that is, we apprehend, *unsaving, graceless grace*] to *absolute* reprobates, i. e. to men for whom, [upon Mr. Hill’s scheme of *absolute reprobation*] there never was in God the least degree of mercy and saving goodness:—This shocking consequence, fixed upon us by Mr. Hill, is the genuine offspring of Calvinistic non-election, which supposes that God sends the Gospel to myriads of men, from whom he absolutely keeps the power of believing it; tantalizing them with offers of free grace *here*, that he may, *without possibility of escape*, sink them hereafter to the deepest hell;—the hell of the Capernaïtes.

According to the Gospel, the reprobation that draws eternal damnation after it, springs from our own personal *free will* doing a final despite to *free grace*; and not from God’s eternal *free wrath*. And if Mr. Hill ask, Why God gives a manifestation of the Spirit of grace to men, who [he foresees] will do it a final despite, as well as to those who through that grace will work out their own salvation? We reply.

1. For the same reason which made him give *celestial* grace to the *angels* who became devils by squandering it away; *paradisiacal* grace to our first parents;—expostulating Gentile grace to Cain:—Jewish, royal grace to Saul;—and Christian, apostolic grace to Judas. If Mr. Hill says, he does not understand what that reason is; we answer; By the same reason which induced the master who corrected Mr. Hill for making a bad exercise at Westminster school, to give his pupil pen, paper, ink, and proper instruction, before he could reasonably call Mr. Hill to an account for his exercise. And by the same reason which would make all Shropshire cry out against Mr. Hill as against a tyrannical master, suppose he horsewhipped his coachman and postilion for not driving him, if he had taken away from them boots, whips, spurs, harness, coach, and horses; and if he had contrived himself the fall of their apartment, that all their bones might be put out of joint, when the floor gave way under them.

2. If Mr. Hill is not satisfied with these illustrations, we will give him some direct answers. God gives a manifestation of his grace to those who make their reprobation sure, by finally resisting his gracious Spirit: First, BECAUSE he will show himself as he is, *gracious and merciful, true and long-suffering towards all*, so long as the day of their visitation lasts.—Thus he bestows a talent of grace upon all his slothful servants who bury it to the last, because he will display his

equity and goodness, although they *will* display their wickedness and sloth.—Secondly, BECAUSE he is determined, that if those servants *will* destroy themselves, their blood shall be upon *their* own heads, according to that well-known Scripture, *O Israel, THOU hast destroyed THYSELF. I would,—and YE WOULD NOT.*—Thirdly, BECAUSE God *will judge the world in righteousness*, and display his distributive justice in rendering to all according to *their works*; *deservedly* clothing his finally unfaithful servants with shame; and making the faithful walk with him in white, *because they are [evangelically] worthy.* And to sum up all in one,—BECAUSE the two Gospel axioms are firm as the pillars of heaven and hell: and God will display their truth before men and angels, and especially before *Pharisees and Antinomians*. Now, according to the first axiom, there is a Saviour, a measure of saving grace, and a day of *initial* salvation *for all*. And according to the second axiom, there is *free will* in all, and a day of judgment, with a *final* salvation or damnation for all, *according to their good or bad works*, that is, according to their *free agency*; the good works of the righteous being the product of their *free, avoidable* co-operation with God's grace; and the bad works of the wicked springing from their *free avoidable* rebellion against that grace.

Hence it appears, that the second Article of the Fictitious Creed contains indeed a “*shocking, not to say blasphemous,*” consequence, but that this consequence is nothing but a sprig of Mr. Hill's supposed “*orthodoxy,*” absurdly grafted upon the supposed “*heresy*” which St. John and St. Paul maintain in these words: “He [Christ] was the true light, which lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world.—The *grace of God*, which bringeth *salvation*, has appeared unto *all men*, teaching (not forcing) us to deny ungodliness, &c. and to live soberly,” &c. (if we are obedient to its *teachings*.)

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE III.

“I BELIEVE it depends WHOLLY on the will of the creature, whether he shall or shall not RECEIVE ANY benefit from divine grace.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE III.

WE believe that the benefits of a temporary redemption, of a day of salvation, and of the *free gift* which came upon all men to the jus-

tification mentioned Rom. v. 18.—we believe, I say, these benefits, far from “*depending wholly on the will of the creature,*” as to the RECEIVING of them, depend no more upon us than our sight, and the light of the sun. All those blessings are *at first* as gratuitously, and irresistibly bestowed upon us, for Christ’s sake, in our present manner of existence, as the divine image and favour were *at first* bestowed upon our first parents in paradise : with only this difference ; before the fall their paradisiacal grace came immediately from God our *Creator* ; whereas since the fall, our *penitential* grace comes immediately and *irresistibly* from God our *Redeemer* ;—I say *irresistibly*, because God does not leave to our option whether we shall *receive* a talent of *redeeming* grace or not, any more than he left it to Adam’s choice whether Adam should receive five talents of *creative* grace or not : although afterward he gives us leave to bury or improve our talent of *redeeming* grace, as he gave leave to Adam to bury or improve his five talents of *creative* grace. Our doctrine of the general redemption and free agency of mankind, stands therefore upon the same scriptural and rational ground, which bears up Mr. Hill’s system of man’s creation and moral agency in paradise ; it being impossible to make any objection against the *personal* loss of *redeeming* grace in Judas, that may not be retorted against the *personal* loss of *creative* grace in Adam or Satan.

But, with respect to all the temporal and eternal benefits, which God has promised by way of REWARD to his every *good and faithful servant*, we believe, that they depend upon the concurrence of two causes, the *first* of which is the *free grace* of God in Jesus Christ : and the *second*, the faithfulness of our assisted and rectified *FREE will* ; which faithfulness is graciously crowned by God’s remunerative justice and evangelical veracity. And, instead of blushing at this doctrine, as if it were “*shocking,*” we glory in it, as being perfectly rational, strictly scriptural, and equally distant from the two rocks against which Calvinian orthodoxy is dashed in pieces : I mean the twin doctrines of wanton free grace, and eternal free wrath, according to which, God, without any respect to the *faith* or *unbelief*, to the *good* or *bad* works of *free* agents, absolutely ordained for some of them the robe of Christ’s imputed righteousness, and the *unavoidable* reward of eternal life by the mean of *unavoidable* faith : while he absolutely appointed for all the rest the robe of Adam’s imputed unrighteousness, and the *unavoidable* punishment of eternal death by means of *necessary, unavoidable* unbelief.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE IV.

“THOUGH the Scripture tells me, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, yet I believe that there is something in the heart of every natural man, that can nourish and cherish the grace of God; and that the sole reason why this grace is effectual in some and not in others, is entirely owing to themselves, and to their own faithfulness, or unfaithfulness, and not to the distinguishing love and favour of God.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE IV.

THOUGH the Scriptures tell us, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and that the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, yet we believe, that from the time God initially raised mankind from their fall, and promised them the celestial Bruiser of the serpent's head, there is a GRACIOUS free agency in the heart of every man who has not yet sinned away his day of salvation: and that, by means of this GRACIOUS free agency, all men, during the *accepted time*, can concur with, and work, under the grace of God, according to the dispensation they belong to.—Again, we believe that no child of Adam is a *natural man* in the Calvinian sense of the word;—[i. e. *absolutely* destitute of *all saving grace*] except he who has *actually* sinned away his day of grace. And when we consider a man as *absolutely* graceless, or as a *child of wrath* in the highest sense of the word, we consider him in fallen Adam, BEFORE God began to raise mankind by the promise of the woman's Seed. Or we must consider that man in his own person AFTER he has done *final* despite to the Spirit of that grace, which has more or less clearly appeared to all men under various dispensations.

Mr. Hill greatly mistakes if he think that, according to our doctrine, God's grace is “*effectual in some, and not in others;*” for we believe that it is *effectual in ALL*, though in a different manner. It has its *first* and *most desirable* effect on them that “cherish it” through the above-mentioned *gracious free agency*. And it has its *second*, and *less desirable* effect on those, who finally reject the gracious counsel of God towards them: for it reproves their sins; it galls their consciences; it renders them inexcusable; it vindicates God's mercy; it

clears his justice; it shows that the Judge of all the earth does no wrong; and it begins in this world the just punishment which righteous vengeance will complete in the next.

The grace of God, therefore, like the Gospel that testifies of it, is a *two-edged sword*: it is a *savour of life* to those who cherish it, and a *savour of death* to those who resist it. That some cherish it, by its assistance, work righteousness to the last, and then receive the reward of the inheritance, is not "*entirely* owing to themselves and to their own faithfulness," as the Fictitious Creed asserts: nor is it "*entirely* owing to the love and favour of God." This happy event has two causes: the *first* is *free grace*, by the assistance of which, the faith and good works of the righteous are begun, continued, and ended: the *second* is *free will* humbly working with free grace: as appears by the numerous Scriptures balanced in the Scripture Scales. And that some, on the other hand, resist the grace of God, and are *personally* given up to a reprobate mind, that they might be damned, is not at all owing to God's *free wrath*, as the scheme of Mr. Hill supposes: nor is it entirely owing to the unfaithfulness and obstinacy of impenitent sinners. This unhappy event has also *two* causes: the *first* is man's *free will* finally *refusing* to concur with free grace, in working out his own salvation: and the *second* is *just wrath* revenging the despite done to God's free grace by such a *final refusal*.

With respect to "*the* DISTINGUISHING love and favour" of God our JUDGE, and his DISTINGUISHED hatred and ill will [on which our *eternal rewards* and *punishments* unavoidably turn, according to Mr. Hill's twin doctrines of *finished salvation* and *finished damnation*] we dare not admit them into our holy religion. We give to "*distinguishing favour*" an important place in our Creed, as appears from the first Article of this; but that favour has nothing to do with God's judicial distribution of rewards or punishments, i. e. with God's appointing of us to eternal life or to eternal death.—We believe that it is a most daring attempt of the Antinomians, to place distinguishing favour and distinguishing displeasure upon the *judicial throne* of God, and in the *judgment-seat* of Christ; no decrees proceeding from thence, but such are dictated by *impartial justice* putting Christ's evangelical law in execution, and strictly *judging* [i. e. *justifying* or *condemning*, *rewarding* or *punishing*] moral agents, according to their works. We should think ourselves guilty of propagating "*a shocking, not to say blasphemous*" doctrine, if we insinuated, that "*distinguishing favour*," and not unbribed justice, dictates God's sentence; God himself having enacted, *Cursed be he that perverteth judgment, &c. and all the people*

shall say AMEN, Deut. xxvii. 19. Nor need I tell Mr. Hill this, who has hinted, that God is such a *partial* judge ;—yea, that carries *partiality* to such a height, as to say to a man who actually defiles a married woman, and treacherously plots the murder of her injured husband, *Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee :—Thou art a man after my own heart.* If Mr. Hill has forgotten this anecdote, I refer him to the Five Letters, the sale of which he does not scruple to advertise again in his Three Letters, saying, “ I now think it the way of duty to permit—the Five Letters to Mr. Fletcher, &c. to be again sold, in order that both friends and enemies may, if possible, be convinced that I NEVER RETRACTED MY SENTIMENTS.”——Strange confidence of boasting! *O Mores!* What have *Morality* and Godliness done to Mr. Hill, that he will put them to a perpetual blush ; lest his *Venus* [for she no longer deserves the name of *Diana*] should redden one moment ?

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE V.

“ I BELIEVE that God sincerely wishes for the salvation of many who never will be saved ; consequently that it is entirely owing to want of ability in God, that what he so earnestly willeth, is not accomplished.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE V.

WE believe that God's attributes perfectly harmonize. Accordingly his *goodness* and *mercy* incline him to “ *wish for the salvation of*” all men, upon gracious terms laid down by his *wisdom* and *veracity*. As a proof of the sincerity of this wish, he swears by himself, that his *antecedent* will or decree, *is not that sinners should die ; but that by the help of his free grace and the submission of their free will, they should turn and live.* He does more still :—He grants to all men a day of initial salvation, and *all that day long he stretches forth his hands* to them ; he reproves them for their sins ; he calls upon them various ways to repent ; and gives them power to do it according to one or another dispensation of his grace ; requiring little of those to whom he gives little ; and much of those to whom much is given. But it is his *subsequent* decree, dictated chiefly by his holiness, justice,

and *sovereignty*, that, if free agents will none of his reproofs, and finally disregard the offers of his grace, *his Spirit shall not always strive with them*. A day of calamity shall follow the day of their neglected *salvation*: and justice shall be glorified in their righteous destruction. This is the sad alternative which God has set before them, if, in opposition to his antecedent will, they [through their free agency] finally choose death, in finally choosing the way that leads to it.

This part of our doctrine may be summed up in three propositions. 1. God's mercy *absolutely* wills the INITIAL salvation of all men by Jesus Christ. 2. God's goodness, holiness, and faithfulness, *absolutely* will the ETERNAL salvation of all those, who, by the concurrence of their assisted, unnecessitated free will, with his redeeming grace, are found penitent, obedient believers, at the end of their day of initial salvation:—And, 3. God's *justice, sovereignty, and veracity, absolutely* will the destruction of all that are found impenitent at the close of the day of their gracious visitation, or initial salvation. To see the truth of these three propositions, we need only consider them in the light of these two Gospel axioms, and compare them with these declarations of Moses and Jesus Christ. *I set life and death before you*, (free agents, who enjoy a day of initial salvation:) *Choose life*: (I offer it you *first*:—*Choose life*, I say,) *that you may live eternally*. But if you *choose death in the error of your ways*, your rejected Saviour will complain, “How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not: and now the things that made for your peace are hid from your eyes;” that is, You are given up to judicial blindness, and to all its fearful consequences.

Hence it is evident, that the damnation of those, who obstinately live and die in their sins, and whom God was willing to save *as free agents upon Gospel terms*, argues no “*want of ability in him*” to save them *eternally*, if he would give up the day of judgment, and exert his *omnipotence* in opposition to his *wisdom, justice, holiness, and veracity*; or if he would destroy the most wonderful of all his works, which is the *free will* of moral agents. We never doubted his ability to unman man, and eternally to save all mankind, if he would *absolutely* do it; it being evident that the Almighty can *overpower* all his creatures if he should be bent upon it, and drive them from sin to *necessitated holiness*, and from hell to heaven, far more easily than a shepherd can drive his frightened sheep from the market to the slaughter-house. Therefore, the supposition that, upon our principles, “God wants ability to save” whom he *absolutely* will save, is

entirely groundless ; every man being actually saved so far as God* *absolutely* wills : for, first, God *absolutely* wills that *all men* should be *unconditionally* saved with *initial* salvation ; and *thus all men* are *unconditionally* saved : and, secondly, he *absolutely* wills that all men who are obedient and faithful unto death, should absolutely be saved with an eternal salvation : and *thus all men* who are obedient and faithful unto death are actually saved. They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of Christ's protecting hand. But what has this Scripture doctrine to do with Calvinism?—With the *necessary, eternal, finished* salvation of *ALL* the disobedient sheep, who turn goats, foxes, lions, and serpents ! Who, far from remembering Lot's wife, slyly rob their neighbours of their ewe-lambs,—their heart's blood,—their reputation !

To conclude : The most that Mr. Hill can justly say against our principles, is ; 1. That according to the Gospel which we preach, *MAN* is a *free agent*, and God is *wise, holy, true, and just* ; as well as good, loving, patient, and merciful : and, 2. That one half of these attributes do not permit him to *necessitate* free agents ; that is, to *make them absolutely* DO or FORBEAR those actions, by which they are to stand or fall in judgment. And let men of reason and religion say, if this doctrine be not more *rational* and *scriptural*, than the Calvinian doctrine of *finished salvation*, and of its inseparable counterpart, *finished damnation*.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE VI.

“ I BELIEVE that the Redeemer not only shed his precious blood, but prayed for the salvation of many souls who are now in hell ; consequently that his blood was shed in vain, and his prayer

* The reader is desired to take particular notice of this observation, because it cuts up by the root Bradwarden's famous argument. “ If you allow, [says he] 1. That God is *able* to do a thing, and, 2. That he is [*absolutely*] *willing* to do a thing. Then, 3. I affirm, that the thing will not, cannot go unaccomplished :—Otherwise God must either lose his power, or change his mind.—If the [*absolute*] will of God could be frustrated and vanquished, its defeat would arise from the created wills either of angels, or of men. But could any created will whatever, &c. counteract and baffle the will of God, the will of the creature must be *superior*, either in strength or in wisdom, to the will of the Creator : which can by no means be allowed.” We fully grant to Mr. Toplady, that the argument is “ *extremely conclusive*,” provided the two words *absolutely* and *absolute* be taken into it. And therefore we maintain, as well as he, that man is *actually* saved, so far as God *absolutely* wills.

rejected of his Father, and that therefore he told a great untruth when he said, I know that thou hearest me always."

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE VI.

WE believe that the Redeemer did not shed his precious blood or pray absolutely in vain for any man : seeing he obtained for all men, in their season, *a day of grace and initial salvation*, with a thousand spiritual and temporal blessings. Nor were his prayers for the *eternal* salvation of those who die *impenitent* rejected by his Father ; for Christ never prayed that they should be eternally saved *in impenitency*. Before Mr. Hill can reasonably charge us with holding doctrines which imply that Christ *told a GROSS UNTRUTH when he said, "I know that thou hearest me always,"* he must prove that Christ ever asked the *eternal* salvation of some men whether they repented or not ; or that he ever desired his Father to *force, TO THE LAST*, repentance, faith, and obedience, upon any man. If Mr. Hill cannot prove this, how can he make it appear that, according to our doctrines of grace, one of our Lord's prayers was ever rejected ? We grant that Christ asked the forgiveness of his murderers, and of those who made sport with his sufferings ; but he asked it upon Gospel terms, that is, *conditionally*. Nor was his prayer ineffectual ; for it obtained for them time to repent, and uncommon helps so to do, with a peculiar readiness in God to pardon them upon their application for pardon : And if, after all, through the power of their free agency, they despised the pardon offered them in the Gospel, and repented not, they shall deservedly perish according to Christ's own declaration. He has acted towards them the part of a gracious Saviour. He never engaged himself to act that of a tyrant :—I mean, he never sent either his good Spirit, or the evil spirit of Satan, to bind the wills of men with adamant chains of necessitated righteousness or of necessitated iniquity, that he might cast some into Abraham's bosom and others into hell ; as Nebuchadnezzar sent the strongest men in his army to bind Daniel's companions, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

Once more : We believe that, with respect to the *reward of the inheritance*, and the doctrine of *eternal* salvation, Christ's atonement and intercession are like his Gospel. Now his Gospel is guarded by what one of Mr. Hill's seconds queerly calls "the valiant Serjeant *IF*," that is, the *conditionality* of the promises and threatenings which

relate to *eternal* salvation and *eternal* damnation ; and this *conditionality* is the rampart of the old Gospel, and the demolition of the new ; strongly guarding the ancient doctrines of *free grace*, *free will*, and *just wrath*, against the novel doctrines of *overbearing grace*, *bound will*, and *free wrath*.

I should not do justice to our cause, if I dismissed this article without retorting Mr. Hill's objection. I have shown how unreasonably we are accused of holding doctrines, which, by "*unavoidable*" consequence, represent Christ as "*telling a gross untruth.*" And now we desire Mr. Hill, or his seconds, to show how the Son of God could, consistently with truth, profess himself to be the *Saviour of men*, the *Saviour and Light of the world*, and the *Drawer of all men unto himself* ; if most men have been from all eternity under the fearful curse of Calvinian reprobation.—We ask, if the Redeemer would have "*told a gross untruth,*" upon the supposition that Calvinism is true, had he called himself *The REPROBATOR of men* ;—*The NON-REDEEMER, the DAMNER of the world*, and the *REJECTER of all men from himself* ; seeing that according to the doctrines of grace, (so called) the bulk of mankind were *EVER reprobated*,—*NEVER redeemed*,—*NEVER initially saved*,—and *NEVER* drawn to Christ.—We beseech candid Protestants to say, if the Bible do not clear up all the difficulties with which prejudiced divines have clogged the genuine doctrines of grace, when it testifies, that our Redeemer and Saviour has procured a *GENERAL temporary REDEMPTION*, together with an *initial salvation*, for all men *UNIVERSALLY* ; and a *particular eternal redemption*, together with a *finished salvation*, for *them that obey him, and endure to the end*. And we entreat the lovers of the whole truth as it is in Jesus, to help us to bring about this scriptural plan, a reconciliation between those who contend for the doctrines of *particular redemption* and *finished salvation* ; and those who maintain the doctrines of *general redemption*, and of *a day of salvation* for all mankind.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE VII.

"I BELIEVE that God, foreseeing some men's nature will improve the grace which is given them, and that they will repent, believe, and be very good, elects them unto salvation."

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE VII.

WE believe that out of mere mercy, and rich free grace in Jesus Christ, without any respect to foreseen repentance, faith, or goodness, God places all men in a state of *initial* salvation; electing them to that state according to the mysterious counsel of his *distinguishing* love, which places some under the bright and direct beams of Gospel truth; whilst he suffers others to receive the external light of it, only through that variety of clouds which we call Calvinism, Popery, Judaism, and Mahometanism;* leaving most in Gentilism, that is, in the dispensation under which Cain, Abel, Abimelec king of Gerar, and Melchisedec king of Salem, formerly were.

2. We believe that God, for Christ's sake, peculiarly [although with different degrees of favour] *accepts* all those who, in all the above-mentioned religions, i. e. *in every nation fear him and work righteousness*. These, when considered as enduring to the end, are his elect according to the election of *remunerative justice*. For these he is gone to *prepare the many mansions in his Father's house*. For these he designs the *reward of the inheritance that fadeth not away in heaven*. And when he speaks of some men as belonging to this number, it is always with respect to his *foreknowledge* that they will *freely* persevere in the obedience of faith; it being the highest pitch of Antinomian dotage to suppose that God, the true, the wise, the holy, and righteous God, *elects* men to the *reward of persevering obedience*, without taking any notice of *persevering obedience in his election*.

To sum up all in a few lines: The doctrine of election has *two* branches; according to the *first* branch we are *chosen that we should be holy* and obedient, in proportion to the ordinary or extraordinary helps, which divine grace affords us under one or other of its dispensations. *This* election to holiness has nothing to do with prescience;

* *Calvinism* is Christianity obscured by mists of Pharisaic election and reprobation, and by a cloud of stoical Fatalism.—*Popery* is Christianity under a cloud of Pharisaic bigotry, and under thick fogs of heathenish superstition.—*Judaism* is Christianity under the veil of Moses.—*Mahometanism* is a jumble of Christianity, Judaism, Gentilism, and imposture.—And *Gentilism* is the religion of Cain and Abel; or if you please, of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, under a cloud of false and dark tradition. Some call it the *religion of nature*: I have no objection to the name, if they understand by it the religion of our *nature* in its present state of *initial* recovery through *Christ*, from its *total* fall in Adam.

it depends entirely on free grace, and *distinguishing favour*. According to the *second* branch of the doctrine of election, we are chosen to receive the rewards of perfected holiness and of persevering obedience, in proportion both to the talents which free, distinguishing grace has afforded us; and to the manner in which our assisted free will has improved those talents. This remunerative election depends on four things. 1. On *Free grace*, promising for Christ's sake the reward of the inheritance to the persevering obedience of faith:—2. On *faithful Free will*, securing that reward by the assistance of free grace, and by the *free obedience* of faith:—3. On *divine Faithfulness*, keeping its Gospel promise for ever:—And 4. On *distributive Justice*, dispensing the reward according to the law of Christ, and according to every man's work.—*This election therefore has much to do with divine prescience*, as depending in part upon God's knowledge that “*some men have improved, or will improve, the grace which is given them, repent, believe, and be good, [if not “very good”] and faithful servants unto the end.*”

Unprejudiced readers will easily see how much our doctrine of election is preferable to that of our opponents. Ours draws after it only a *harmless reprobation* from some peculiar favours, and a *righteous reprobation* from rewards of grace and glory obstinately despised or wantonly forfeited: but the election of the Calvinists is clogged with the dreadful dogmas of an unscriptural and terrible reprobation, which might be compared to a well-known monster, “*Prima Leo, postrema Draco, media ipsa Chimera.*” Its head is *Free wrath*; its body, *Unavoidable sin*; and its tail, *Finished damnation*. In a word, Our ELECTION recommends God's free, distinguishing grace, without pouring any contempt on the holiness of Christ's precepts, the sanction of his law, the veracity of his threatenings, and the conditionality of his promises. And our REPROBATION displays God's absolute sovereignty, without sullyng his mercy, impeaching his veracity, or disgracing his justice. In a word, *our Election* doctrinally guards the throne of sovereign grace, and *our Reprobation*, that of Sovereign justice. But Calvinian Election and Reprobation doctrinally overthrow both those thrones: or if they are left standing, it is to allow *Free Wrath* to fill the throne of justice, and *unchaste, bloody Diana*, to step into the throne of grace, whence she hints to Laodicean believers that they may *with advantage* commit adultery, murder, and incest; calling as many as take her horrid inuendoes, *My love, my undefiled*, &c. and assuring them, that *they* shall never perish, and that all things (the most grievous sins not excepted) shall work for their good.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE VIII.

“ I BELIEVE that the love and favour of Him, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning, and whose gifts and callings are without repentance, may vary, change, and turn, every hour, and every moment, according to the behaviour of the creature.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE VIII.

WE believe that God's works were all originally very good; and that God did love or approve of them all, as very good in their places. We maintain, that some of God's works, such as some angels, and our first parents, by free, avoidable disobedience, forfeited God's love or approbation. He approved or loved them while they continued righteous; and disapproved or hated them, when the bad use which they made of their free will deserved his disapprobation or hatred.—Again: we believe that God's *ABSOLUTE gifts and callings are without repentance*. God never repented that he gave all mankind his paradisiacal favour in Adam, and yet all mankind forfeited it by the fall.—God never repented that he CALLED all his servants, and GAVE to every one of them his talents as he thought fit: and yet, when the wicked and slothful servant had buried and forfeited his talent, God said, *Take the talent from him*.

Once more: We believe, that so certain as God is the gracious Creator and the righteous Judge of angels and men, the doctrines of divine grace and divine justice (or the two Gospel axioms) are perfectly reconcileable; and that of consequence, God can justly curse mankind with temporal death, after having blessed them with paradisiacal life; and punish them in hell, after having blessed them a second time with *initial salvation* during their day of personal probation on earth. To deny this, is to deny that there are graves on earth or torments in hell for any of the children of men.

Nevertheless we believe that there is no positive change in God. From eternity to eternity he is the same holy and faithful God; therefore he unchangeably *loves righteousness, and hates iniquity*; apostacy in men or in angels does not imply any change in him; the change being only in the receptive disposition of his *free-willing* creatures.

If I make my eyes so sore that I cannot look with pleasure at the sun, or that its beams, which cheered me yesterday, give me pain

to-day; this is no proof that the sun has changed his nature. The law that condemns a murderer, absolves me *now*: but, if I stab my neighbour in ten minutes, the same law that now absolves me, will in *ten minutes* CONDEMN me.—Impossible! says Mr. Hill's scheme: "The law changes not." I grant it: but a *free agent* may change; and the law of liberty, which is but the transcript of God's eternal nature, is so ordered, that without changing at all, it nevertheless treats all *free agents* according to their changes. The changes that God makes in the world do not change him; much less is he changed by the variations of free agents: such variations indeed lay *rebels* and *penitents* open to a new aspect from the Deity; but that aspect was in the Deity BEFORE they laid themselves open to it. Fire, without changing its nature, melts wax and stiffens clay; now if a rebel's heart absolutely hardens itself, so that it becomes like unyielding clay: or if a penitent's heart humbles, itself so that it becomes like yielding wax, God changes not any more than the fire, when he hardens the stiff rebel by resisting him, and melts the yielding penitent by giving him more grace.

To understand this better, we must remember that God's eternal nature is to *resist the proud and give grace to the humble*; and that when free grace, (which has appeared to all men) assists us, we are as free to choose *humility and life*, as we are to choose *pride and death* when we dally with temptation, or indulge the natural depravity of our own hearts. Hence it follows, that the *judicious difference* which God makes when he alternately smiles and frowns, dispenses rewards and punishments, springs not from any alteration in his unchangeable nature: but from a change in the mutable will and behaviour of free agents:—a change this, which arises from *THEIR WILL FREELY RESISTING* divine grace, if the alteration be for the worse; and from *THEIR WILL yielding WITHOUT NECESSITY* to that grace, if the change be for the better. Nor are we any more ashamed to own man's *free agency* before a world of fatalists, than we are ashamed to say, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous: though hand join in hand the wicked shall not be unpunished: Doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth, and will render to every man according to his works*, that is, according to his free will; works being *our own works*, only so far as they spring from *our own free will*. And we think that the opposite doctrine is one of the most absurd errors that ever disgraced Christianity; and one of the most dangerous engines, which were ever invented in *Babel* to sap the walls of *Jerusalem*:—a dreadful engine this, which, if it rested upon *truth*, would pour floods of disgrace on all the divine perfections; would upset the tribunal

of the Judge of all the earth ; and would raise upon the tremendous ruins the throne of the doctrinal idol of the day : I mean the spurious doctrine of grace, which I have sometimes called *The great Diana* of the Calvinists, because, like *the great Diana of the Ephesians*, it may pass at once for *Luna* or *finished salvation* in heaven, and for *Hecate* or *finished damnation* in hell.

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE IX.

“ I BELIEVE that the seed of the word by which God’s children are born again, is a *corruptible* seed ; and that so far from enduring *for ever* (as that mistaken apostle Peter rashly affirms,) it is frequently rooted out of the hearts of those in whom it is sown.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE IX.

WE believe that *the word* or *the truth* of God is the divine seed, by which sinners are born again when they receive it, that is, when they believe ; and this spiritual seed (as that enlightened apostle Peter justly affirms) *endures for ever* ;—but not for Antinomian purposes ;—not to say to fallen believers in the very act of adultery or incest, *My love ! my undefiled !*—No, it *endures for ever*, as a seed of reviving or terrifying truth ; it *endures for ever* as a two-edged sword to defend the righteous or to wound the wicked ; to protect obedient believers, or to pierce disobedient and obstinate unbelievers ; it *endures for ever* as a sweet savour of life to them that receive and keep it ; and as a bitter savour of death to them that never receive it, and to them that finally cast it away, and never bring forth fruit to perfection.

But although the seed of the word can *never* be lost with respect to *both* its effects, yet, (as we have already observed) it is too frequently lost with regard to its *more desirable* effect. If Mr. Hill doubts of it, we refer him to the parable of the sower, where our Lord observes that the good seed was *thus lost* in three sorts of people out of four, merely through the want of co-operation or concurrence on the part of free will, which he calls *good* or *bad ground*, *soft* or *stony ground*, &c. according to the good or bad choice it makes, and according to the steadiness or fickleness of that choice. And if

Mr. Hill exclaim against the obvious meaning of so well-known a portion of the Gospel, the world will easily see that, supposing *his* doctrine of grace deserves to be called *chaste*, when it prompts him to vindicate as openly as he dares, the profitableness of adultery and incest to fallen believers ; it by no means merits to be called *devout*, when it excites him to insinuate, that our Lord preached a “ *shocking, not to say blasphemous doctrine.*”

THE FICTITIOUS CREED.

ARTICLE X.

“ I BELIEVE that Christ does not always give unto his sheep eternal life ; but that they often perish, and are by the power of Satan frequently plucked out of his hand.”

THE GENUINE CREED.

ARTICLE X.

WE believe that Christ's sheep mentioned in John x. are obedient, persevering believers ; that is, as our Lord himself describes them, John x. 4, 5, 27. persons that *hear* [i. e. obey] his voice, and *whom he knows* [i. e. approves:] persons that *know* [i. e. approve] his voice ;—that *know not* [i. e. do not approve] the voice of strangers ;—and *flee from a stranger* instead of following him :—In a word, persons that actually *follow the good Shepherd* in some of his folds or pastures. In this description of a *sheep* every verb is put in the *present* tense, to show us that the word *sheep* denotes a character, or person actually possessed of such a character : so that the moment the character changes ; the moment a man who once left all to follow Christ, leaves Christ to *follow a stranger*, he has no more to do with the name and privileges of a *sheep*, than a *deserter* or a *rebel* has to do with the name and privileges of his majesty's *soldiers* or *subjects*.

According then to our doctrine, no *sheep of Christ*, that is, no *actual follower* of the Redeemer, perishes. We think it is shocking to say, that any of them are plucked out of his hand. On the contrary, we frequently say with St. Peter, *Who will harm you* [much more, who will separate you from the love of Christ] *if ye be followers of that which is good* ; [i. e. if you be sheep ;] and we insist upon the veracity of our Lord's promise, *He that endureth unto the end*, in the character of a sheep, i. e. in the way of faith and obedience, *the same*

shall be [eternally] saved. And we maintain, that so long as a believer does not make shipwreck of the faith and of a good conscience;—so long as he continues a *sheep*, a harmless follower of the Lamb of God, he can no more perish, than God's everlasting throne can be overturned. But what has this doctrine of our Lord to do with Calvinism?

With regard to the sheep mentioned in Matt. xxv. 33, 34, whom our Lord calls *BLESSED of his Father*, we believe that they represent the multitude of obedient persevering believers, whom two apostles describe thus: *BLESSED are they that do his (God's) commandments, that they may have right (or if Mr. Hill pleases, privilege) to the tree of life, and enter, &c. into the city, Rev. xxii. 14.—BLESSED is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.—And this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, James i. 12.—1 John v. 3.—*FOR SUCH ENDURING, OBEDIENT believers, a kingdom of glory is prepared from the foundation of the world; and to it they are and shall be judicially elected; while the goats, i. e. unbelievers, or disobedient fallen believers, are and shall be judicially reprobated from it. Hence it is, that when our Lord accounts for his judicial election of the obedient, (whom he parabolically calls *sheep*) he does not say, *Inherit the kingdom, &c. for I absolutely finished your salvation*: but he says, *Inherit the kingdom for ye gave me meat, &c. ye fed the hungry from a right motive, and what you did in that manner, I reward it as if you had done it to myself.* In other terms, *Ye heard my voice and followed me*, in hearing the whispers of my grace, and following the light of your dispensation; and now I own you as my eternally-rewardable elect, my *sheep*, which have followed me without finally drawing back.

Again, when our Lord gives an account of the judicial reprobation of the finally disobedient, whom he parabolically calls *goats*, he does not say, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for then I absolutely finished your eternal reprobation.* No: this is the counterpart of the Gospel of the day. But he says, *Depart, &c. for ye gave me no meat*, by feeding the hungry in your generation, &c. That is, ye did not believingly follow me in following your light and my precepts. Either you never began your course, or you drew back before you had finished it. Either you never voluntarily listed under my banner, or you deserted before you had fought the good fight out; either you never believed in me, the Light of the world, and your light; or, instead of keeping the faith, you voluntarily, avoidably, unnecessarily, and resolutely

made shipwreck of it, and of a good conscience. And therefore your damnation is of yourselves. You have *personally* forfeited your conditional election to the rewards of persevering obedience, and *personally* made your conditional reprobation from those rewards sure by your *final* disobedience.

From these evangelical descriptions of the *sheep* and the *goats*, mentioned in John x. and Matt. xxv. it appears to us indubitable :
 (1) That these *sheep*, [i. e. obedient persevering believers] *shall never perish*, although they might have perished, if they had *brought upon themselves swift destruction by denying the Lord that bought them*.
 (2) That they shall be eternally saved, although they *might* have missed eternal salvation, if they had finally disregarded our Lord's declaration, *He that endureth unto the end the same shall be finally saved*.—(3) That the good Shepherd peculiarly laid down his life for the *eternal* redemption of obedient, persevering believers ; and that these believers are sometimes *eminently* called God's *elect*, because they make their *conditional* calling to the rewards of perseverance sure, by actually persevering in the obedience of faith.—(4) That the peculiarity of the *eternal* redemption of Christ's persevering followers, far from being connected with the *absolute* reprobation of the rest of mankind, stands in perfect agreement with the doctrines of a *general, temporary redemption* ; and a *general initial salvation* ; and with the doctrines of a *gratuitous election* to the blessings of one or another dispensation of God's saving grace ;—and of a *conditional election* to the rewards of voluntary, unnecessitated obedience.—
 (5) That our opponents give the truth as it is in Jesus two desperate stabs, when they secure the *peculiar eternal redemption* of finally disobedient believers, and comfort mourning backsliders in so unhappy a manner, as to overthrow the *general, temporary redemption* of all mankind : and to encourage or countenance the present disobedience of Laodicean believers.—(6) That the Calvinian doctrines of grace, which do this double mischief under such fair pretences, are of all the tares which the enemy sows, those which come nearest to the wheat, and of consequence those by which he can best feed his immoral goats, deceive simple souls, set Christ's moral sheep at perpetual variance, turn the fruitful field of the church into a barren field of controversy, and make a deistical world think that faith is enthusiastical fancy ; that orthodoxy is immoral nonsense ; and that revelation is nothing but an apple of discord.—(7) And lastly, that the doctrines of grace which we maintain, do equal justice to the divine attributes ;—defend faith, without wounding obedience :—oppose Pharisaism, without recommending Antinomianism ;—assert the truth

of God's promises, without representing his most awful threatenings as words without meaning ;—reconcile the Scriptures, without wounding conscience and reason ; exalt the gracious wonders of the day of atonement, without setting aside the righteous terrors of the great day of retribution ; extol our heavenly Priest, without pouring contempt upon our divine Prophet ;—and celebrate the honours of his cross, without turning his sceptre of righteousness into a Solifidian reed, his royal crown into a crown of thorns, and his *law of liberty* into a *rule of life*, by which his subjects can no more stand or fall in judgment, than an Englishman can stand or fall by the *rules of civility* followed at the French court.

To the best of my knowledge, Reader, thou hast been led into the depth of our doctrines of grace. I have opened to thee the mysteries of the evangelical system, which Mr. Hill attacks as the heresy of the *Arminians*. And now let *Impartiality* hand thee up to the judgment-seat. Let *Reason* and *Revelation* hold out to thee their simultaneous light. Pray that the *Spirit of truth* may help thine infirmities : turn *Prejudice* out of the court : and let *Candour* pronounce the sentence and say, whether our principles or those of Mr. Hill, “*inevitably*” draw after them “*shocking, not to say blasphemous,*” consequences ?

I shall close this answer to the Creed which that gentleman has composed for Arminians, by an observation which is not entirely foreign to our controversy. In one of the Three Letters which introduce the Fictitious Creed, Mr. Hill says, “*Controversy, I am persuaded, has not done me any good ;*” and he exhorts me to examine closely whether I cannot make the same confession. I own that it would have done me harm, if I had blindly contended for my opinions. Nay, if I had shut my eyes against the light of truth ;—if I had set the plainest scriptures aside, as if they were not worth my notice ;—if I had overlooked the strongest arguments of my opponents ;—if I had advanced groundless charges against them ;—if I had refused to do justice to their good meaning or piety ;—and, above all, if I had taken my leave of them by injuring their moral character, by publishing over and over again arguments which they had properly answered, without taking the least notice of their answers ;—if I had made a solemn promise not to read one of their books, though they should publish a thousand volumes ; if continuing to write against them, I had fixed upon them (as “*unavoidable*” consequences) absurd tenets, which have no more necessary connexion with their principles than the doctrine of general redemption has with Calvinian reprobation ; if I had done this, I say, controversy would have

wounded my conscience or my reason ; and without adding any thing to my light, it would have immovably fixed me in my prejudices, and perhaps branded me before the world for an *Arminian* bigot. But, as matters are, I hope I may make the following acknowledgment without betraying the impertinence of proud boasting.

Although I have often been sorry that controversy should take up so much of the time, which I might with much more satisfaction to myself have employed in devotional exercises :—and although I have lamented, and do still lament, my low attainments in the *meekness of wisdom*, which should constantly guide the pen of every controversial writer ; yet I rejoice that I have been enabled to persist in my resolution, either to wipe off, or to share the reproach of those who have hazarded their reputation in defence of pure and undefiled religion. And, if I am not mistaken, my repeated attempts have been attended with these happy effects : in vindicating the *moral* doctrines of grace. I hope, that, as a *Man*, I have learned to think more closely, and to investigate truth more ardently than I did before. There are *rational* powers in the dullest souls, which lie hid as sparks in a flint. Controversial opposition and exertion, like the stroke of the steel, have made me accidentally find out some of these latent sparks of reason, for which I should never have thanked my Maker, if I had never discovered them. I have frequently been thankful to find that my horse could travel in bad roads better than I expected ; nor do I think that it is a piece of Pharisaism to say, I am thankful to find that my mind can travel with more ease than I thought she could, through theological roads rendered almost impassable by heaps of doctrinal rubbish, brought from all parts of Christendom, and by briers of contention which have kept growing for above a thousand years.—To return : as a *Divine*, I see more clearly the gaps and stiles, at which mistaken good men have turned out of the narrow way of truth, to the right hand and to the left.—As a *Protestant*, I hope I have much more esteem for the Scriptures in general, and in particular for those practical parts of them which the Calvinists had insensibly taught me to overlook or despise. And this increasing esteem is, I trust, accompanied with a deeper conviction of the truth of Christianity, and with a greater readiness to defend the Gospel against infidels, Pharisees, and Antinomians.—As a *Preacher*, I hope I can do more justice to a text, by reconciling it with seemingly contrary scriptures.—As an *Anti-Calvinist*, I have learned to do the Calvinists justice in granting that there is an *election of distinguishing grace* for God's peculiar people, and a *particular redemption* for all believers who are faithful unto death :—And by that means, as a *Controvertist*, I can more easily

excuse pious Calvinists, who through prejudice, mistake *that* scriptural election for *their* Antinomian election; and who consider *that* particular redemption as the only redemption mentioned in the Scriptures. Nay, I can without scruple allow Mr. Hill, that his doctrines of *finished salvation* and *irresistible grace*, are TRUE with respect to all those who die in their infancy.—As one who is called an *Arminian*, I have found out some flaws in *Arminianism*, and evidenced my impartiality in pointing them out, as well as the flaws of Calvinism. [See the Preface.]—As a *Witness* for the truth of the Gospel, I hope I have learned to bear reproach from all sorts of people with more undaunted courage. And I humbly trust, that, were I called to seal with my blood the truth of the *doctrines of grace* and *justice* against the *Pharisees* and the *Antinomians*, I could (divine grace supporting me to the last) do it more rationally, and of consequence with greater steadiness.—Again, as a *Follower of Christ*, I hope I have learned to disregard my dearest friends for my heavenly Prophet: or to speak the language of our Lord, I hope I have learned to *forsake father, mother, and brothers for Christ's sake and the Gospel's*.—As a *Disputant*, I have learned that solid arguments and plain scriptures, make no more impression upon bigotry, than the charmer's voice does upon the deaf adder; and by that mean, I hope, I depend less upon the powers of reason, the letter of the Scripture, and the candour of professors, than I formerly did.—As a *Believer*, I have been brought to see and feel, that the power of the Spirit of truth, which teaches men to be of *one heart, and of one mind*, and makes them *think and speak the same*, is at a very low ebb in the religious world; and that the prayer which I ought continually to offer is, O Lord, baptize Christians with the Spirit of truth and the fire of love. Thy kingdom come! Bring thy church out of the wilderness of error and sin, into the kingdom of *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*.—As a *Member of the Church of England*, I have learned to be pleased with our holy Mother for giving us floods of pure morality to wash away the few remaining Calvinian freckles still perceptible upon her face.—As a *Christian*, I hope I have learned in some degree to exercise that charity, which teaches us boldly to oppose a dangerous error, without ceasing to honour and love its abettors, so far as they resemble our Lord; and teaches us to use an irony with St. Paul and Jesus Christ, not as an enemy uses a dagger, but as a surgeon uses a lancet or a caustic: and lastly, as a *Writer*, I have learned to feel the truth of Solomon's observation, "Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh; let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: *Fear God and keep his commandments*;

for this is the whole duty of man," and the sum of the Anti-solifidian truth, which I endeavour to vindicate.

I do not say that I have learned any of these lessons as I should have done ; but I hope I have learned so much of them as to say, that in these respects my controversial toil has not been altogether in vain in the Lord. And now, Reader, let me entreat thee to pray, that if I am spared to vindicate more fully what appears to us the *scriptural doctrine of grace*, I may be so helped by the Father of lights and the God of love, as to speak the *pure truth in perfect love*, and never more drop a needlessly-severe expression. Some such have escaped me before I was aware. In endeavouring to render my style nervous, I have sometimes inadvertently rendered it provoking. Instead of saying that the doctrines of grace, (so called) represent God as "*absolutely graceless*," towards myriads of "*reprobated culprits*," I would now say, that, upon the principles of my opponents, God appears "*devoid of grace*" towards those whom he has absolutely "*reprobated*" from all eternity. The thought is the same, I grant ; but the expressions are less grating and more decent. This propriety of language I labour after as well as after more meekness of wisdom. The Lord help me and my antagonists to *keep our garments clean* ! Controvertists ought to be clothed with an ardent flaming love for truth, and a candid humble regard for their neighbours. May no root of prejudice stain that flaming love ! no malice rend our seamless garments ! And, if they are ever *rolled in blood*, may it be only in the blood of our common enemies, destructive error, and *the man of sin* !

AN
EQUAL CHECK
TO
PHARISAISM & ANTINOMIANISM.

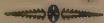
PART I.

CONTAINING,

- I. AN HISTORICAL ESSAY ON THE DANGER OF PARTING FAITH AND WORKS.
- II. SALVATION BY THE COVENANT OF GRACE, A DISCOURSE PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF MADELEY, APRIL 18, AND MAY 9, 1773.
- III. A SCRIPTURAL ESSAY ON THE ASTONISHING REWARDABLENESS OF WORKS, ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT OF GRACE.
- V. AN ESSAY ON TRUTH; OR, A RATIONAL VINDICATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION BY FAITH, WITH A DEDICATORY EPISTLE TO THE RIGHT HON. THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.



BY THE AUTHOR OF THE
CHECKS TO ANTINOMIANISM.



The armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.—2 Cor. vi. 7.



PREFACE.



I. **T**HE first piece of this Check was designed for a preface to the Discourse that follows it : but as it swelled far beyond my intention, I present it to the Reader under the name of *An Historical Essay* ; which makes way for the tracts that follow.

II. With respect to the *Discourse*, I must mention what engages me to publish it. In 1771 I saw the propositions called the *Minutes*. Their author invited me to “ *review the whole affair.*” I did so ; and soon found, that I had “ *leaned too much towards Calvinism,*” which, after mature consideration, appeared to me exactly to coincide with *speculative* Antinomianism ; and the same year I publicly acknowledged my error in these words :

“ But whence springs this almost general Antinomianism of our congregations ? Shall I conceal the sore because it festers in *my own* breast ? Shall I be partial ? No : in the name of Him who is no respecter of persons, I will confess *MY SIN*, and that of *many* of my brethren, &c.—Is not the Antinomianism of hearers fomented by that of preachers ? Does it not become *us* to take the greatest part of the blame upon *ourselves*, according to the old adage, *Like priest, like people* ? Is it surprising that some of *us* should have an Antinomian audience ? Do *we* not *make* or *keep* it so ? When did *we* preach such a *practical* sermon as that of our Lord on the mount ? or write such *close* letters, as the epistles of St. John ?” Second Check, vol. i. p. 133, to the end of the paragraph.

When I had thus openly confessed, that I was involved in the guilt of *many* of *my brethren*, and that I had so leaned towards *speculative*, as not to have made a proper stand against *practical*, Antinomianism ; who could have thought, that one of my most formidable opponents would have attempted, to screen his mistakes behind some passages of a manuscript sermon, which I preached twelve years ago ; and of which, by some means or other, he has got a copy ?

I am very far, however, from recanting that old discourse. I still think the doctrine it contains excellent in the main, and very proper

to be enforced (though in a more guarded manner) in a congregation of hearers violently prejudiced against the first Gospel axiom. Therefore, out of regard for the grand, leading truth of Christianity, and in compliance with Mr. Hill's *earnest entreaty*, [Fin. Stroke, p. 45,] I send my sermon into the world, upon the following reasonable conditions: 1. That I shall be allowed to publish it, as I preached it a year ago in my church; namely, with *additions in brackets*, to make it at once a *fuller* check to Pharisaism, and a *finishing* check to Antinomianism: 2. That the largest addition shall be in favour of *free grace*: 3. That nobody shall accuse me of *forgery*, for thus adding my present light to that which I had formerly; and for thus bringing out of my little treasure of experience *things new and old*: 4. That the press shall not groan with the charge of *disingenuity*, if I throw into notes some unguarded expressions, which I formerly used without scruple, and which my more enlightened conscience does not suffer me to use at present: 5. That my opponent's call to print my sermon, will procure me the pardon of the public, for presenting them with a plain, *blunt* discourse, composed for an audience chiefly made up of colliers and rustics: And lastly, that, as I understand English a little better than I did twelve years ago, I shall be permitted to rectify a few French idioms, which I find in my old manuscript; and to *connect* my thoughts a little more like an Englishman, where I can do it without the least misrepresentation of the sense.

If these conditions appear unreasonable to those who will have heaven itself without any condition, I abolish the distinction between my old sermon, and the additions that guard or strengthen it; and referring the reader to the title-page, I publish my discourse on Rom. xi. 5, 6, as a *guarded* sermon, delivered in my church on Sunday, April the 18th, &c. 1773, exactly eleven years after I had preached upon the same text a sermon useful upon the whole, but in some places unguarded, and deficient with respect to the *variety* of arguments and motives, by which the capital doctrines of *free grace* and *Gospel obedience* ought to be enforced.

III. With regard to the SCRIPTURAL ESSAY upon the rewardableness, or evangelical worthiness of works, I shall just observe, that it attacks the grand mistake of the Solifidians, countenanced by three or four words of my old sermon. I pour a flood of scriptures upon it; and after receiving the fire of my objector, I return it in a variety of scriptural and rational answers, about the solidity of which the public must decide.

IV. The ESSAY ON TRUTH will, I hope, reconcile judicious moralists to the doctrine of salvation *by faith*, and considerate Solidifiers to the doctrine of salvation *by the works* of faith ; reason and Scripture concurring to show the constant dependence of works upon faith ; and the wonderful agreement of the doctrine of present salvation by *TRUE faith*, with the doctrine of eternal salvation by *GOOD works*.

I hope, that I do not dissent, in my observations upon *faith*, either from our Church, or approved Gospel ministers. In their *highest* definitions of that grace, they consider it *only* according to the fulness of the *Christian* dispensation ; but my subject has obliged me to consider it also according to the dispensations of John the Baptist, Moses, and Noah. Believers, under these *inferior* dispensations, have not always *assurance* ; nor is the assurance they sometimes have so bright as that of adult Christians, Matt. xi. 11. But undoubtedly assurance is inseparably connected with the faith of the *Christian* dispensation, which was not *fully* opened, till Christ opened *his* glorious baptism on the day of pentecost, and till his spiritual kingdom was set up with power in the hearts of his people. Nobody therefore can truly believe, according to *this* dispensation, without being *immediately* conscious both of the forgiveness of sins, and of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This is a most important truth, derided indeed by fallen Churchmen, and denied by Laodicean Dissenters ; but of late years gloriously revived by Mr. Wesley and the ministers connected with him :—A truth this, which cannot be too strongly, and yet too warily insisted upon in our lukewarm and speculative age : and as I would not obscure it for the world, I particularly entreat the reader to mind the last *erratum* ; without omitting the last but one, which guards the doctrine of *initial* salvation by absolute *free grace*.

I do not desire to provoke my able opponents ; but I must own, I should be glad to reap the benefit of my *Checks*, either by finding an increase of religious sobriety and mutual forbearance among those, who make a peculiar profession of faith in Christ ; or by seeing my mistakes [if I am mistaken] brought to light, that I might no longer recommend them as Gospel truths. With this view only, I humbly entreat my brethren and fathers in the church, to point out *by Scripture* or *argument* the doctrinal errors that may have crept into the *Equal Check*. But if, upon close examination, they should find, that it holds forth the two Gospel axioms in due conjunction, and marks out the *evangelical mean* with strict impartiality ; I hope, the moderate and judicious, in the Calvinistic and Anti-calvinistic party, will so far unite upon this plan, as to keep on terms of reciprocal toleration, and

brotherly kindness together ; rising with redoubled indignation, not one against another, but against those pests of the religious world, *prejudice* and *bigotry*, the genuine parents of implacable fanaticism, and bloody persecution.

Madeley, May 21, 1774.

EQUAL CHECK.

PART I.



AN

HISTORICAL ESSAY,

UPON THE IMPORTANCE AND HARMONY OF THE TWO GOSPEL PRECEPTS, BELIEVE AND OBEY ; AND UPON THE FATAL CONSEQUENCES THAT FLOW FROM PARTING FAITH AND WORKS.

WHEN the Gospel is considered as opposed to the error of the Pharisees, and that of the Antinomians, it may be summed up in the two following propositions: 1. In the day of conversion, we are saved freely as sinners, (i. e. made freely partakers of the privileges that belong to our Gospel dispensation in the church militant,) through the merits of Christ, and by the instrumentality of a living faith. 2. In the day of judgment we shall be saved freely as saints, (i. e. made freely partakers of the privileges of our Gospel dispensation in the church triumphant,) through the merits of Christ, and by the evidence of evangelical works. Whence it follows: 1. That nothing can absolutely hinder our justification in a Gospel day, but the want of true faith; and, 2. That nothing will absolutely hinder our justification in the day of judgment, but the want of good works. If I am not mistaken, all the evangelical doctrine of faith and works turns upon those propositions. They exactly answer to the grand directions of the Gospel. Wilt thou enter into Christ's sheepfold? *Believe.*—Wilt thou stay there? *Believe and Obey.*—Wilt thou be numbered among his sheep in the great day? *Endure unto the end: Continue in well doing:* that is, persevere in faith and obedience.

To *believe* then and *obey*, or, as Solomon expresses it, *To fear God and keep his commandments, is the whole duty of man.* Therefore, a professor of the faith, without genuine obedience, and a pretender to

obedience, without genuine faith, equally miss their aim, while a friend to faith and works put in their proper place, a possessor of the *faith* which *works* by love, hits the Gospel mark, and so runs as to obtain the prize : for the same *true and faithful Witness* spoke the two following, and equally express declarations. *He that BELIEVETH on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that BELIEVETH NOT the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* John iii. 36. And, *The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall come forth, they that have DONE GOOD, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have DONE EVIL, unto the resurrection of condemnation.* John v. 29.

See that sculler upon yonder river. The unwearied diligence and watchful skill with which he plies his two oars, points out to us the work and wisdom of an experienced divine. What an even gentle spring does the mutual effort of his oars give to his boat ! Observe him : his right hand never rests, but when the stream carries him too much to the left : he slacks not his left hand, unless he is gone too much to the right ; nor has he sooner recovered a just medium, than he uses both oars again with mutual harmony. Suppose that for a constancy he employed but one, no matter which, what would be the consequence ? He would only move in a circle ; and if neither wind nor tide carried him along, after a hard day's work he would find himself in the very spot where he began his idle toil.

This illustration needs very little explaining ; I shall just observe that the Antinomian is like a sculler, who uses only his right hand oar ; and the Pharisee, like him who plies only the oar in his left hand. One makes an endless bustle about *grace* and *faith*, the other about *charity* and *works* ; but both, after all, find themselves exactly in the same case ; with this single difference, that one has turned from truth to the right, and the other to the left.

Not so the judicious, unbiassed preacher, who will safely enter the haven of eternal rest, for which he and his hearers are bound. He makes an equal use of the doctrine of *faith*, and that of *works*. If at any time he insist most upon *faith*, it is only when the stream carries his congregation upon the Pharisaic shallows on the left hand ; and if he lay a preponderating stress upon *works*, it is only when he sees unwary souls sucked into the Antinomian whirlpool on the right hand. His skill consists in so avoiding one danger as not to run upon the other.

Nor ought this watchful wisdom to be confined to ministers : for though all are not called to direct congregations ; yet all moral agents are, and always were, more or less called to direct themselves, that is, to *occupy till* the Lord come, by making a proper use of their

talents according to the parable, Matt. xxv. 15 to 31. God gave to angels and man "*remigium alarum*," the two oars, or if you please, the equal wings of faith and obedience; charging them to use those grand powers, according to their original wisdom and enlightened conscience. Or, to speak without metaphor, he created them in such a manner, that they *believed* it their duty, interest, and glory, to *obey* him without reserve; and this *faith* was naturally productive of a universal, delightful, perfect *obedience*. Nor would they ever have been wanting in *practice*, if they had not first wavered in *principle*. But when Lucifer had unaccountably persuaded himself, in part at least, either that obedience was mean, or that rebellion would be advantageous: and when the crafty tempter had made our first parents believe in part that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, far from dying, they should *be as God* himself; how possible, how easy was it for them to venture upon an act of rebellion?—By rashly playing with the serpent, and sucking in the venom of his crafty insinuations, they soon gave their *faith* a wilful wound, and their *obedience* naturally died of it. But alas! it did not die unrevenged; for no sooner had *fainting faith* given birth to a *dead work*, than she was destroyed by her spurious offspring. Thus *Faith* and *Obedience*, that couple more lovely than David and his friend, more inseparable than Saul and Jonathan in their death, were not divided. They even met with a common grave, the corrupt, atrocious breast of a rebellious angel, or of apostate man.

Nor does St. James give us a less melancholy account of this fatal error. While faith slumbered, *lust conceived*, and brought forth *sin*, and *sin finished*, brought forth *death*, the death of faith, and consequently the *moral death* of angelic spirits and human souls, who equally live by faith * during their state of probation. So fell Lucifer from heaven, to rule and rage in the darkness of this world; so fell Adam from paradise, to toil and die in this vale of tears: so fell Judas from an apostolic throne, to hang himself and go to his own place.

* Faith in God as *Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge*, was not less necessary to Lucifer and Adam, in order to their standing in a state of innocence, than faith in God as *Redeemer, Sanctifier, and Rewarder* of them that diligently seek him, is necessary to *sinner*s, in order to their recovery from a state of guilt; or to *believers*, in order to avoid relapses and final apostacy. Faith, therefore, so far as it implies an unshaken confidence in God, and a firm adherence to his will, is as eternal as love and obedience. But when it is considered as *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*, which are essential properties of a believer's faith in this present state of things, it is evident that it will necessarily end in sight, as soon as the curtain of time is drawn up; and terminate in enjoyment, as soon as God's glory appears without a veil.

Nor can we rise but in a way parallel to that by which they fell. For as a *disbelief* of our CREATOR, productive of *bad works*, sunk our first parents ; so a *faith* in our REDEEMER, productive of *good works*, must instrumentally raise their fallen posterity.

Should you ask, which is most necessary to salvation, *faith* or *works*? I beg leave to propose a similar question : Which is most essential to breathing, *inspiration* or *expiration*? If you reply, that "The moment either is absolutely at an end, so is the other ; and therefore both are equally important:" I return exactly the same answer. If *humble faith* receive the breath of spiritual life ; *obedient love* gratefully returns it, and makes way for a fresh supply : when it does not, the Spirit is *grieved* ; and if this want of co-operation is persisted in to the end of *the day of salvation*, the sin unto death is committed, the spirit is *quenched* in his saving operation, the apostate dies the second death, and his corrupt soul is cast into the bottomless pit, as a putrid corpse into the noisome grave.

Again, if faith has the advantage over works by giving them birth, works have the advantage over faith by perfecting it. *Seest thou*, says St. James, speaking of the Father of the faithful, *how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect*? And if St. Paul affirms that *works* without faith are *dead*, St. James maintains, that *faith* without works is *dead* also.

Once more, Christ is always the primary, original, properly meritorious cause of our justification and salvation. To dispute it is to renounce the faith, and to plead for antichrist. And yet, to deny, that, under this primary cause, there are secondary, subordinate, instrumental causes of our justification, and consequently of our salvation, is to set the Bible aside, and fly in the face of judicious Calvinists, who cannot help maintaining it, both from the pulpit and from the press.* Now if in the day of our conversion *faith* is the

*The Rev. Mr. Madan does not scruple to call *our faith* "the instrumental CAUSE" of our justification. See his sermon on James ii. 24. printed by Fuller, London, 1761. page 18. And if we shall be justified in the day of judgment *BY* *our words*, they shall undoubtedly be at least an *evidencing CAUSE* of our final justification. Hence it is that the same judicious divine speaks, (p. 30. l. 4, &c.) of our being "justified in this three-fold sense of the word, *meritoriously* by Christ, *instrumentally* by faith, and *declaratively* by works, which are the fruits of faith."

The reader will permit me to illustrate the essential difference there is between *primary* and *secondary* causes, by the manner in which David became Saul's son-in-law. The *primary* causes of this event were undoubtedly on God's part, assisting power and wisdom ; and on king Saul's part, a free promise of giving his daughter in marriage to the man who should kill Goliath. The *secondary* causes (according to the Rev. Mr. Madan's plan) may be divided into *instrumental* and *declarative*. The *instrumental* causes of David's honourable match were his *faith*, his *sling*, his *stone*, Goliath's *sword*, &c. : and

secondary subordinate cause of our acceptance as *penitent sinners*; in the day of judgment *works*, even the works of faith, will be the secondary subordinate cause of our acceptance as *persevering saints*. Let us therefore equally decry dead faith and dead works, equally recommend living faith and its important fruits.

Hitherto I have endeavoured to check the rapid progress of speculative Antinomianism, that perpetually decries works, and centres in the following paragraph, which presents without disguise the doctrine of the absolute, unconditional perseverance of adulterous believers and incestuous saints.

Saving faith being immortal, cannot only subsist without the help of good works; but no aggravated crimes can give it a finishing stroke. A believer may in cool blood murder a man, after having seduced his wife, without exposing himself to the least real danger of forfeiting either his heavenly inheritance, or the divine favour: because his *salvation*, which is *finished in the full extent of the word*, without any of his good works, cannot possibly be frustrated by any of his evil ones.

It will not be improper now to attempt a check to Pharisaism, which perpetually opposes faith, and whose destructive errors, collected in one position, may run thus:—If people perform external acts of worship towards God, and of charity towards their neighbour; their principles* are good enough: and should they be faulty, these good works will make ample amends for that deficiency.—Upon this common plan of doctrine, if the filthy sepulchre is but whitewashed, and the noisome grave adorned with a flowery turf, it little matters

the *declarative* or *evidencing* causes, were his *works*. He insists upon fighting the giant, he renounces carnal weapons, puts on the armour of God, runs to meet his adversary, slings a fortunate stone, brings his adversary down, flies upon him, and cuts off his head. By *these works* he was *evidenced* a person duly qualified to marry the princess; or, to keep to the Rev. Mr. Madan's expression, "*by*" these "*works*," he was "*declaratively*" judged a man fit to be rewarded with the hand of the princess. Now is it not clear that his *works*, upon the *evidence* of which he received such a reward, had as important a part in his obtaining it, as the faith and sling by whose *instrumentality* he wrought the works? And is it not strange that the Rev. Mr. Madan should be an orthodox divine, when he says, that "*we are declaratively justified by works*," and that Mr. Wesley should be a dreadful heretic for saying, that we are *saved not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition*; or in other terms, that we are finally justified not by works as the *primary, meritorious* cause; but as a *secondary, evidencing, declarative* cause?

* The ingenious author of a new book called, *Essays on public worship, patriotism, &c.* does not scruple to send such an exhortation abroad into the world. "Let us substitute honesty instead of faith. It is the only foundation of a moral character, and it ought to be the only test of our religion. It should not signify what, or how little a man believed, if he was honest.—This would put Christianity upon the best footing." See the *Monthly Review* for March, 1773.

what is within, whether it be a *dead man's bones*, a *dead heart* swelled with pride, or *all manner of corruption*.

It is hard to say, who do Christianity most disservice, the Solifidians, who assert that works are *nothing before God*; or the Pharisees, who maintain that certain religious ceremonies, and external duties of morality are the very soul of religion. O thou, true believer, bear thy testimony against both their errors; and equally contend for the tree and the fruit, the faith of St. Paul and the works of St. James; remembering that if ever the gates of hell prevail against thee, it will be by making thee overvalue faith and despise good works, or overrate works and slight *precious faith*.

The world, I grant, is full of Gallios, easy or busy men, who seldom trouble themselves about faith or works, law or Gospel. Their latitudinarian principles perfectly agree with their loose conduct: and if their volatile minds are fixed, it is only by a steady adherence to such commandments as these: "Be not righteous overmuch:—Get and spend:—Marry or be given in marriage:—Eat and drink.—Lie down to sleep and rise up to play:—Care neither for heaven nor hell:—Mind all of earth but the awful spot allotted thee for a *grave*, &c." However, while they punctually observe this decalogue, their conscience is sometimes awakened to a sense of corroding guilt, commonly called uneasiness, or low spirits: and if they cannot shake it off by new scenes of dissipation, new plunges into sensual gratifications, new schemes of hurrying business; if a religious concern fastens upon their breasts, the tempter deludes them, by making his false coin pass for the *gold tried in the fire*. If his dupes will have *faith*, he makes them take up with that of the *Antinomians*. If they are for *works*, he recommends to them those of the *self-righteous*. And if some seem cut out to be brands in the church; fiery, persecuting, implacable zealots; he gives them a degree in the university of Babel: one is a *Bachelor* of the science of sophistry, another a *Master* of the liberal art of calumny, and a third a *Doctor* in human, or diabolical *divinity*. But if all those graduates have not as much faith as Simon Magus, or as many works as the conceited Pharisee; yet they may have as much zeal for the church as the bigot, who set out for Jerusalem for Damascus in pursuit of heretics. They may sometimes pursue those who dissent from them, even unto *strange cities*.

Has not the world always swarmed with those devotees, who, blindly following after *faith* without loving obedience, or after *obedience* without loving faith, have made havock of the church, and driven myriads of worldly men to a settled contempt of godliness:

while a few, by equally standing up for true faith and universal obedience, have alone kept up the honour of religion in the world? Take a general view of the church, and you will see this observation confirmed by a variety of black, bright, and mixed characters.

The first man born of a woman, is a striking picture of perverted mankind. He is at once a sullen Pharisee, and a gross Antinomian: he sacrifices to God, and murders his brother. Abel, the illustrious type of converted sinners, truly believes and acceptably sacrifices. *Faith and works* shine in his life with equal lustre; and in his death we see what the godly may expect from the *impious church* and the *pious world*. Protomartyr for the doctrine of *this* check, he falls the first innocent victim to *Pharisaical pride* and *Antinomian fury*. *The sons of God mix with the daughters of men, learn their works, and make shipwreck of the faith*. Enoch nevertheless truly believes in God, and humbly walks with him: *faith and works* equally adorn his character. The world is soon full of *misbelief*, and the earth of *violence*. Noah however believes and works: he credits God's word, and builds the ark. *This work condemns the world, and he becomes heir of the righteousness which is by FAITH*.

Consider Abraham; see how he believes and works! God speaks, and he leaves his house, his estate, his friends, and native country. His faith works by love; he exposes his life to recover his neighbour's property, he readily gives up his right of choice to prevent a quarrel, he earnestly intercedes for Sodom, he charitably hopes the best of its wicked inhabitants, he gladly entertains strangers, humbly washes their feet, diligently instructs his household, and submissively offers up Isaac his favourite son, the child of his old age, the hope of his family, his own heir, and that of God's promise: *by these works his faith is made perfect*, and he deserves to be called the *Father of the faithful*. Moses treads in his steps: he believes, quits Pharaoh's court, and suffers affliction with the people of God. Under his conduct the Israelites believe, obey and cross the Red Sea with a high hand; but soon after they murmur, rebel, and provoke divine vengeance. Thus the destruction which they had avoided in Goshen through *obedient faith*, they meet in the wilderness through *the works of unbelief*. Nature is up in arms to punish their backslidings. The pestilence, the sword, earthquakes, fiery serpents, and fire from heaven, combine to destroy the ungrateful Antinomian apostates.

In the days of Joshua, that eminent type of Christ, *faith and works* are happily reconciled; and whilst they walk hand in hand, Israel is invincible, the greatest difficulties are surmounted, and the land of promise is conquered, divided, and enjoyed.

Under the next judges faith and works seldom meet; but as often as they do, a deliverance is wrought in Israel. Working believers carry all before them: they *can do all things through the Lord strengthening them*: they are little omnipotents; but if they suffer the Antinomian Delilah to cut off their locks, you may apply to them the awful words of David (spoken to magistrates, who forsake the way of righteousness :) *I have said, Ye are Gods, and all of you are children of the Most High; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes*; like Zimri or Corah, Dathan or Abiram.

The character of Samuel, the last of the judges, is perfect. From the cradle to the grave he *believes and works*; he serves God and his generation. His sons, like those of Eli, halt in practice, and their faith is an abomination to God and man. David believes, works, and kills the blaspheming Philistine. He slides into Antinomian faith, wantonly seduces a married woman, and perfidiously kills an honest man. Solomon follows him in the narrow path of working faith, and in the broad way of speculative and practical Antinomianism. The works of the son correspond with those of the father. Happy for him, if the repentance of the idolatrous king equalled that of his adulterous parent!

In the days of Elijah the gates of hell seemed to have prevailed against the church. Queen Jezebel had *cut off the prophets of the Lord*, and appointed 400 chaplains to his majesty king Ahab, who shared the dainties of the royal table, and therefore found it easy to demonstrate, that *pleading for Baal* was orthodoxy, and prosecuting honest Naboth as a *blasphemer of God and the king*, was an instance of true loyalty. But then all were not lost: seven thousand men showed their faith by their works; they firmly believed in Jehovah, and steadily refused bowing the knee to Baal.

In the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah, wickedness, persecution, and imaginary good works, prevailed under a show of zeal for the temple, and of regard for the people of God. But even then also, there was a *small remnant* of believing and working souls, who set fire to the stubble of wickedness during the pious reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah.

Follow the chosen nation to Babylon. They all profess the faith still: but how few believe and work! Some do however: and by their *work of faith and patience of hope*, they *quench the violence of fire*, and *stop the mouths of lions*: and what is more extraordinary still, they strike with astonishment a fierce tyrant, a Nebuchadnezzar: they fill with wonder a cowardly king, a Darius: and disarming the former of his rage, the latter of his fears, they sweetly force

them both to confess the true God among their idolatrous courtiers, and throughout their immense dominions.

In the days of Herod the double delusion is at the height. John the Baptist boldly bears his testimony against it in the wilderness, and our Lord upon the mount, in the temple, and every where. But alas! what is the consequence? By detecting the Antinomianism of the Pharisees, and the Pharisaism of Antinomians, he makes them desperate. The spirit of Cain rises with tenfold fury against an innocence far superior to that of Abel. Pharisees and Herodians must absolutely glut their malice with his blood. He yields to their rage; and while he *puts away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, he condescends to die a martyr for the right *faith*, and the true *works*; he seals, as a dying priest, the truth of the two Gospel axioms, which he had so often sealed as a living *prophet*, and continues to seal as an eternal *Melchisedec*.

The apostles, by precept and example, powerfully enforce their Lord's doctrine and practice. Their lives are true copies of their exhortations: their deepest sermons are only exact descriptions of their behaviour. It is hard to say which excite men most to *believe* and *obey*, their *seraphic discourses* or their *angelic conduct*. Their labours are crowned with general success. Judaism and Heathenism are every where struck at, and fall under the *thunder* of their *words of faith*, and the *shining power* (might I not say the *lightning*, of their *works of love*. Thus the *world is turned upside down* before faith and works; the *times of refreshing* come from the *presence of the Lord*; and earth, cursed as it is, becomes a paradise for obedient believers.

Hell trembles at the revolution; and before all is lost, *Satan* hastens to *transform himself into an angel of light*. In that favourable disguise, he puts his usual stratagem in execution against the believing, working, and suffering church. He instils speculative faith, pleads for relaxed manners, puts the badge of contempt upon the daily cross, and gets the immense body of the Gnostics and Laodiceans into his snare. Sad and sure is the consequence. The genuine works of faith are neglected: idle works of men's invention are substituted for those of God's commandments. And fallen churches, through the *smooth way* of Antinomianism, return to the *covert way* of Pharisaism, or to the *broad way* of infidelity.

Such was the deplorable condition of the western church when Luther appeared. True faith was dethroned by superstitious fancy: and all the works of the former were well nigh choked by the thorns that sprang from the latter. The zealous reformer, with his sharp

scythe, justly cuts them down through a considerable part of Germany. His terribly successful weapon, which had already done some execution in the Netherlands, France, and Italy, might have reached Rome itself, if the effects of his unguarded preaching had not dreadfully broke out around him in the North.

There the balance of the evangelical precepts was lost. Solifidians openly prevailed. Our Lord's sermon upon the mount, and St. James's epistle, were either explained away, or wished out of the Bible. The amiable, practical *law of Christ*, was perpetually confounded with the terrible, impracticable *law of innocence*: and the avoidable penalties of the former, were injudiciously represented as one with the dreadful curse of the latter, or with the abrogated ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensations. Then the law was publicly wedded to the devil, and poor Protestant Solifidians were taught to bid equal defiance to both.

The effect soon answered the cause. Lawless believers, known under the name of Anabaptists, arose in Germany. They fancied themselves the dear, the elect people of God; they were complete in Christ; their election was absolutely made sure; all things were theirs: and they went about in religious mobs to deliver people from *legal bondage*, and bring them into *Gospel liberty*, which, in their opinion, was a liberty to despise all laws divine and human, and to do, every one, what was right in his own eyes. Luther was shocked, and cried out; but the mischief was done, and the Reformation disgraced: nor did he perseveringly apply the proper remedy pointed out in the Minutes, *salvation not by the merit of works, but by the works of faith as a condition*.

Nevertheless he was wise enough to give up the root of the mischief in the Lutheran Articles of Religion, presented to the emperor Charles the Vth at Augsburg, whence they were called *the Augsburg Confession*. In the XIIth of those articles, which treats of *repentance*, we find these remarkable words. "We teach touching repentance, that those who have sinned after baptism, may obtain the forgiveness of their sins *as often as they are converted*," &c. Again, "We condemn the Anabaptists, who say, that those who have been once justified can no more lose the Holy Spirit."

This doctrine, clearly opened, and frequently enforced, might have stopped the progress of Antinomianism. But alas! Luther did not often insist upon it, and sometimes he seemed even to contradict it. In the meantime Calvin came up; and though I must do him the justice to acknowledge, that he seldom went the length of modern Calvinists in speculative Antinomianism, yet he made the matter

worse by advancing many unguarded propositions about absolute decrees, and the necessary, final perseverance of backsliding believers.

This doctrine, which, together with its appendages, so nicely reconciles Baal and free grace; a *little*, or (if the backslider is so minded) a *good deal* of the world, and heaven; this flesh-pleasing doctrine, which slyly parts *faith* and *works*, while it decently unites *Christ* and *Belial*, could not but be acceptable to injudicious and carnal Protestants: and to make it pass with others, it was pompously decorated with the name of the *doctrine of grace*; and *free grace preachers*, as they called themselves, insinuated that St. James's doctrine of *faith being dead without works*, was a doctrine of wrath, an uncomfortable antichristian doctrine, which none but "proud justiciaries," and rank Papists, could maintain. Time would fail to mention all the books that were *indirectly* written against it; or to relate all the abuse that was *indirectly* thrown upon these two propositions of St. Paul, *Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap*, and *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die*.

Let it suffice to observe, that by these means the hellish sower of Antinomian tares prevailed. Thousands of *good men* were carried away by the stream. And, what is more surprising still, not a few of the *wise* and *learned*, favoured, embraced, and defended the Antinomian delusion.

Thus what Luther's Solifidian zeal had begun, and what Calvin's predestinarian mistakes had carried on, was readily completed by the Synod of Dort; and the Antinomianism of *many* Protestants was not less confirmed by that assembly of Calvinistic divines, than the Pharisaism of *many* Papists had been before by the Council of Trent.

It is true, that as some good men in the church of Rome have boldly withstood Pharisaical errors, and openly pleaded for salvation by grace through faith; so some good men in the Protestant churches have also steadily resisted Antinomian delusions and publicly defended the doctrine of salvation, not by the proper merit of works, but by the works of faith as a condition. But alas! as the Popes of Rome crushed, or excommunicated the former, almost as fast as they arose; so have petty Protestant Popes blackened, or silenced the latter. The true Quakers, from their first appearance, have made as firm a stand against the Antinomians, as the Valdenses against the Papists; and it is well known that the Antinomians, who went from England to America with many pious Puritans, whipped the Quakers, men and women, cut off their ears, made against them a law of banishment upon pain of death, and upon that tyrannical law hanged four of their

preachers, three men and one woman* in the last century, for preaching up the Christian perfection of faith and obedience, and so disturbing the peace of the elect, who were *at ease in Sion*, or rather *in Babel*.

I need not mention the title of *heretic*, with which that learned and good man, Arminius, is to this day dignified, for having made a firm and noble stand against wanton Free Grace. The banishment or deprivation of Grotius, Episcopius, and other Dutch divines, is no secret. And it is well known that in England Mr. Baxter, Mr. Wesley, and Mr. Sellon, are to this day *an abhorrence to all Antinomian flesh*.

I am sorry to say, that, all things considered, these good men have been treated with as much severity by Protestant Antinomians, as ever Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin were by Popish Pharisees: The Antinomian and Pharisaic spirit run as much into one, as the two arms of a river that embraces an island. If they divide for a time, it is only to meet again, and increase their mutual rapidity. I beg leave to speak my whole mind. It is equally clear from Scripture and reason, that we must *believe*, in order to be saved consistently with God's *mercy*; and that we must *obey*, in order to be saved consistently with his *holiness*. These propositions are the immoveable basis of the two Gospel axioms. Now if I reject either of them, it little matters which. If I blow my brains out, what signifies it, whether I do it by clapping the mouth of a pistol to my *right* or to my *left* temple?

Error moves in a circle: extremes meet in one. A warm Popish Pharisee, and a zealous Protestant Antinomian, are nearer each other than they imagine. The one will tell you, that by going to mass and confession, he can get a fresh absolution from the priest for any sin that he shall commit: the other, whose mistake is still more pleasing to flesh and blood, assures you that he has already got an eternal absolution, so that "under every state and circumstance he can possibly be in, he is justified from all things, his sins are for ever and for ever cancelled."

But if they differ a little in the idea of their imaginary privileges, they have the honour of agreeing in the main point. For, although the one makes a great noise about *faith* and *free grace*, and the other about *works* and *true charity*, they exactly meet in *narrow grace* and *despairing uncharitableness*. The Pharisee in Jerusalem asserts, that

* Their names were William Leddra, Marmaduke Stephenson, William Robinson, and Mary Dyer. See *The History of the Quakers*, by Sewell; and *New England judged*, by George Bishop.

“out of the Jewish church there can be no salvation,” and his companions in self-election heartily say *Amen!* The Pharisee in Rome declares, that “there is no salvation out of the apostolic, Romish church,” and all the Catholic elect set their seal to the antichristian decree. And the Antinomian in London *insinuates* (for he is ashamed to speak quite out in a Protestant country) that there is no salvation out of the Calvinistic predestinarian church. Hence, if you oppose his principles in ever so rational and scriptural a manner, he supposes that you are “quite dark,” that all your holiness is “self-made,” and all your “righteousness a cobweb spun by a poor spider out of his own bowels:” and if he allows you a chance for your salvation, it is only upon a supposition, that you may yet repent of your opposition to his errors, and turn Calvinist before you die. But might not an inquisitor be as charitable? Might he not hope that the poor heretic, whom he has condemned to the flames, may yet be saved, if he cordially kiss a crucifix, and say *Ave Maria* at the stake?

And now, candid reader, look around, and see what these seemingly opposite errors have done for Christ’s church. Before the Reformation, Christendom was overspread with superstition and fanaticism; and since, with lukewarmness and infidelity. But let us descend to particulars.

What has *Pharisaism* done for the Church of Rome? It has publicly rent from her all the Protestant kingdoms, and secretly turned against her an innumerable multitude of Deists: for while bigots continue ridiculous bigots still; men of wit, headed by ingenious infidels, continually pour undeserved contempt upon Christianity, through the deserved wounds which they give to Popery. They represent Christ’s rational and humane religion as one of the worst in the world, unjustly charging it with the persecuting spirit, and horrible massacres of those *Catholics*, so called, who, mangling the truth, and running away with one-half of the body of Christian divinity, disgrace the whole by childish fooleries, and worse than barbarian uncharitableness.

And what does *Pharisaism* for the Protestant churches? So far as it prevails, spreads it not around its fatal leaven, a general indifference about heartfelt religion? Turns it not the lively oracles of God into a dead letter, the sacraments into empty ceremonies, the means of grace into rattles to quiet a guilty conscience with, the precious blood of Christ into a *common thing*, his hallowed cross into an inglorious tree, external devotion into a cloak for secret hypocrisy; and some acts of apparent benevolence into the rounds of a ladder, the bottom of which reaches hell, and behold, spiritual fiends

(all manner of diabolical tempers) are seen continually *ascending and descending on it?*

Does it not incline us to despise those who are eminently pious, as if they were out of their senses; to despair of those who are notoriously wicked, as if they were absolute reprobates: and to prefer a popular imitator of Barabbas to a meek follower of Jesus? Does it not prompt us to lay an undue stress upon trifles, and make an endless ado about some frivolous circumstance of external worship, while we *pass over judgment, mercy, and the love of God?* And by that mean, does it not confirm modern Herodians in their *Antinomianism*, and modern Sadducees in their *infidelity*? In a word, does it not render the stiff neck stiffer, the blind understanding blinder, the hard heart stouter, the proud spirit more rebellious, more indifferent about mercy, more averse to Gospel grace, more satanical, readier for all the *curses* of the law, and riper for all the *woes* of the Gospel?

But let us consider the other extreme. What has *Calvinism* done for Geneva? Alas! it has in a great degree shocked and driven it into Arianism, Socinianism, and infidelity. See the account lately given of it in the *French Encyclopedia*: Article *Geneva*. "Many of the clergy of Geneva (says judicious Mr. D'Alembert) no longer believe the divinity of Jesus Christ, of which Calvin, their leader, was a zealous defender, and for which he had Servetus burned, &c.—They believe that there are punishments in another world, but only for a limited time; thus purgatory, which was one of the chief causes of the Reformation, is now the only punishment which many Protestants admit after death. A new proof this, that man is being full of contradictions. To sum up all in one word, the religion of many pastors at Geneva is *perfect Socinianism*."

What good has *Calvinism* done in England? Alas! very little. When a bow is bent beyond its proper degree of tension, does it not fly to pieces? When you violently pull a tree towards the west, if it recover itself, does it not violently fly to the east? Has not this generally been the case with respect to all the truths of God, which have been forced out of their scriptural place one way or another? Calvinism, in the days of Oliver Cromwell, was at the very same height of splendour, at which Popery had attained in the days of king Henry the VIIIth, and they share the same downfall. *Mole ruunt suâ*. At the Reformation, the FIRST grand doctrine of Christianity, (*salvation by grace through faith*) which had been forced out of its place, and almost broken by the Papists, flew back upon them with such violence, that it shook the holy see, frightened the Pope, and

made some of the richest jewels fall from his triple crown. In like manner, the SECOND grand doctrine of Christianity (*salvation not by the proper merit of works, but by the works of faith as a condition*) which had been served by the Antinomians just as the first Gospel axiom by the Papists, recovering itself out of their hands, flew back upon them with uncommon violence at king Charles's restoration, by an *indirect* blow shook two thousand Calvinistic ministers out of their pulpits; and getting far beyond its Scriptural place, began to bear hard upon, and even thrust out the grand doctrine of *salvation by grace*. Thus the absurdity and mischief of Antinomianism began to drive again the generality of English Protestants into Pharisaism, Arianism, Socinianism, or open infidelity; that is, into the state, in which most of the learned are at Rome and Geneva.

I grant that near forty years ago, some clergymen from the university of Oxford returned to the principles of the Reformation, and zealously contended again for *salvation by grace* and for *universal obedience*. By the divine blessing upon their indefatigable endeavours, *Faith* and *Works* met again, and for some time walked undisturbed together. A little revolution then took place: *Practical Christianity* revived, and leaning upon her fair daughters, *Truth* and *Love*, took a solemn walk through the kingdom, and gave a foretaste of heaven to all that cordially entertained her.

She might, by this time, have turned this favourite isle into a land flowing with spiritual milk and honey, if Apollyon, disguised in his angelic robes, had not played, and did not continue to play, his old game. Nor does he do it in vain. By his insinuations men of a contrary turn rise against *Practical Christianity*. Many of the devout call her *Heresy*, and many of the gay name her *rank Enthusiasm*. In the meantime she drops a tear of tender pity, prays for her mistaken persecutors, and quietly retires into the wilderness. Lean *Obedience* is soon driven after her to make more room for speculative *Faith*, who is so highly fed with luscious food and wild honey, that she is quite bloated, and full of humours. Nay, in some she is degenerated into an impatient quarrelsome something, which calls itself *Orthodoxy*, or *the Truth*, and must be treated with the greatest respect; whilst *Charity*, cold, sickly, and almost starved for want of *work*, is hardly used with common good manners.

In a word, *Antinomian Christianity* is come, and makes her public entry in the professing church. A foolish virgin, who assumes the name of *Free Grace*, walks before her, and cries, "Bend the knee, bow the heart, and entertain the old, the pure, the only Gospel." An ugly black boy called *Free wrath*, bears her enormous train, and with

wonderful art hides himself behind it. While thousands are taken with the smiles and cheerfulness of *Wanton Free Grace*, (for that is the virgin's right name) and for her sake welcome her painted mother; a gray-headed Seer passes by, fixes his keen eyes upon the admired family, sees through their disguise, and warns his friends. This is highly resented, not only by all the lovers of the sprightly, alluring maid, but by some excellent people, who, in the simplicity of their hearts, mistake her for the celestial virgin *Astrea*. Mr. H. and Mr. T., two of her champions, fall upon the aged Monitor; and to the great entertainment of the Pharisaic and Antinomian world, do their best to tread down his honour in the dust.

While they are thus employed, a rough countryman, who had taken the Seer's warning, throws himself full in the way of *Antinomian Christianity*, and tries to stop her in her triumphal march. *Wanton Free Grace* is a little disconcerted at his rudeness, she reddens, and soon shows herself the true sister of *Free Wrath*. To be revenged of the clown, she charges him with—guess what—A rape? No, but with being great with *the scarlet whore*, and concerned with the Romish *man of sin*. If he is acquitted of these enormities, they say that she is determined to indite him for murder or “*forgery* ;” and if that will not do, for highway robbery, or “*execrable Swiss slander*.” The Mountaineer, who *counts not his life dear*, stands his ground, and in the scuffle discovers the *black boy*, lays fast hold of him, and (notwithstanding the good words that he gives one moment, and the floods of invectives which he pours out the next) he drags him out to public view, and appeals to the Christian world. *Et adhuc sub judice lis est*.

But leaving England, the scene of the present controversy, I ask, What does *Calvinism* at this day for Scotland, where national honours are paid to it, and where for some ages it has passed for the pure Gospel? Alas! not much, if we may depend upon the observations of a gentleman of piety and fortune, who went last year with an eminent minister of Christ, to inspect the state of spiritual Christianity in the north, and brought back this melancholy account: “The decay of vital religion is yet more visible in Scotland than in England.”

Should, by this time, some of my readers be ready to ask, what *Arminianism* has done for Holland and England; I reply: If by *Arminianism* you mean the pure doctrine of Christ, especially the doctrine of our free justification through Christ, by the *instrumentality* of faith in the day of a sinner's conversion, and by the *evidence* of the works of faith afterward: if you mean, as I do, a system of evangelical truth, in which the two Gospel precepts, *believe* and *obey*, are duly balanced, and *faith* and *works* kept in their scriptural place; I answer

that, under Christ, it has done all the good that has been done, not only in Holland and England, but in all Christendom.

Be not then mistaken : When ministers, leaning towards speculative Antinomianism, have done good ; it has not been by *preaching wanton free grace*, and by *shackling the free Gospel* : but by powerfully enforcing the truth as it is in Jesus ; by crying aloud, “ Believe, thou lost sinner, and be saved by grace—Obey, thou happy believer, and evidence thy salvation by works—And whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely, for all things are now ready.”—So far as they have started aside from this guarded, and yet encouraging Gospel, they have pulled down with one hand what they built with the other ; they have tried to make up the *Pharisaic*, by widening the *Antinomian* gap ; they have departed from what we call *Christianity*, and what you are at full liberty to call *Arminianism*, *Baxterianism*, or *Wesleyanism*.

To return : I observed just now, that Antinomianism drives us into *Pharisaism*, *Socinianism*, and *infidelity* ; but might I not have added *fatalism*, the highest degree of fashionable infidelity ? And after all, what is *fatalism*, in which the greatest infidels unanimously shelter themselves in our day ? Is it not the beginning or the end of high Calvinism, whose emblematical representation may be a serpent forming a circle while it bites its tail, with this motto, *In sese volvitur error*, *After a large circuit error ends where it began* ? If high Calvinism is the head, is not *fatalism* the tail ?

For my part, I shall not wonder, if some of our high predestinarians find themselves, before they are aware, even at Hobbs’s or Voltaire’s feet, humbly learning there the horrible lessons of *fatalism*. Nay, if I am not mistaken, they perfectly agree with the French philosopher in the capital point. One might think that they have converted him to their orthodoxy, or that he has perverted them to his infidelity. Candid reader, judge of it by the following extract of his lecture on *Destiny*.

“ Homer (says he) is the first writer, in whose works we find the notion of *fate*. It was then in vogue in his time. Nor was it adopted by the Pharisees, till many years after : for these Pharisees themselves, who were the first men of letters among the Jews, were not very ancient, &c. But philosophers needed neither the help of Homer, nor that of the Pharisees, to persuade themselves, that all things happen by immutable decrees, that *all is fixed*, that *all is necessary*.” Now for the proof. “ Bodies (adds he) tend to the centre, peartrees can never bear pineapples, a man cannot have above a certain number of teeth.”—And directly flying from *teeth* to *ideas*, he would have

us infer, that we can no more arrange, combine, alter, or dismiss our ideas, than our grinders, and that an adulterer defiles his neighbour's bed as *necessarily* as a peartree produces pears. He even adds, "If thou couldst alter the destiny of a fly, thou shouldst be more powerful than God himself." See *Dictionaire Philosophique portatif*, Londres, 1764, page 163, 164.

This ingenious infidel is quite as *orthodox* (in the Calvinistic sense of the word) in his article on *Liberty*. "What does then your free will consist in (says he) if it is not in a power to do *willingly* what *absolute necessity* makes you choose?" Nay he is so staunch a predestinarian, so complete a fatalist, that he maintains, no one can choose *even or odds* without an irresistible order of all-directing fate. And he concludes by affirming, that all "*liberty of indifference*," that is, all power to do a thing, or to leave it undone at our option, without the necessitating agency of fate, "*is arrant nonsense*." See the same book, p. 243, &c.

Thus the most subtle, self-righteous infidel in France, by going full east; and the most rigid, thorough-paced Antinomian in England, by going full west, in the ways of error, meet at last face to face in the antipodes of truth. O may the shock caused by their unexpected encounter, wake them both out of their fatal dreams, to call upon him who *takes the wise in their own craftiness*, imparts true wisdom to the simple, and crowns the humble with grace and glory.

As high Calvinism on the left hand falls in with *fatalism*, so on the right hand it runs into the wildest notions of some deluded mystics, and ranting perfectionists. Judicious reader, you will be convinced of it by the following propositions, advanced by Molinos,* the father of the mystics and perfectionists, who are known abroad under the name of *Quietists*. These positions, among many others, were condemned by the Pope as "rash, offensive to pious ears, erroneous, scandalous, &c." I extract them from the Bull of his Holiness, given at Rome, 1687, and published by the archbishop of Cambray at the end of his book, called *Instruction pastorale*, printed at Amsterdam, 1698. See page 192, &c.

"*Velle operari active est Deum offendere, qui vult esse solus agens, &c.* To be willing to be active and work, is to offend God, who will be the sole agent, &c.—Our natural activity stands in the way of grace, and hinders the divine operation and true perfection, *quia Deus vult operari in nobis sine nobis*, because God will work in us without us.

* He was a pious, but injudicious clergyman of the Church of Rome, who, in some of his works, spoiled the doctrine of *grace* by Calvinistic refinements; and that of *Christian perfection* by Antinomian rant.

The soul ought not to think upon rewards and punishments.—We must leave to God the caring of all that concerns us, that he may do in us, without us, his divine will. He that will be resigned to God's will, must not ask him any thing, because petitions savour of our own will, and therefore are *imperfect*;" (or, to speak in the Calvinistic way, *sinful*.)

Again, "God, to humble and transform us, permits and wills, that the devil should do violence to the bodies of some perfect souls" [i. e. *established believers*] "and should make them commit carnal actions against their will.—God now sanctifies his saints by the ministry of devils, who, by causing in their flesh the above-mentioned violent impulses, makes them despise themselves the more, &c.—St. Paul felt such violent impulses in his body: hence he wrote, *The good that I would, I do not; and the evil which I would not, I do*. These violent impulses are the best means to humble the soul to nothing, and to bring it to true holiness, and the divine union; there is no other way, *et hæc est via facilior et tutior*, and this is the easier and the safer way.—David, &c. suffered such violent impulses to external impure actions, &c."

Who does not see here some of the most absurd tenets, or dangerous consequences of Calvinism! Man is a mere machine in the work of salvation.—The body of holy Paul is sold under sin.—David in Uriah's bed is complete and perfect in Christ—Actual adultery humbles believers, and is an excellent mean of sanctification, &c.

When we see Antinomianism thus defiling the sounder part of the Romish and Protestant churches; when the god of this world avails himself of these "Antinomian dotages" to confirm myriads of stiff Pharisees in their self-righteous delusions; and when the bulk of men, shocked at the glaring errors of both, run for shelter to Deism, and gross infidelity; who would not desire to see the doctrines of *faith* and *works*, *grace* and *obedience*, so stated and reconciled, that *men of reason* might no longer be offended at Christianity; nor *men of religion* one at another?

This is again attempted in the following discourse, the substance of which was committed to paper many years ago, to convince the Pharisees and Papists of my parish, that there is no salvation by the faithless works of the law, but by a living faith in Jesus Christ. With shame I confess, that I did not *then* see the need of guarding the doctrine of *faith*, against the despisers of *works*. I was chiefly bent upon pulling up the tares of Pharisaism: those of Antinomianism were not yet sprung up in the field, which I began to cultivate: or

my want of experience hindered me from discerning them. But since, what a crop of them have I perceived and bewailed!

Alas! they have in a great degree ruined the success of my ministry. I have seen numbers of lazy seekers, enjoying the dull pleasure of sloth on the couch of wilful unbelief, under pretence that God was to do all in them without them. I have seen some lie flat in the mire of sin, absurdly boasting that they could not fall; and others make the means of grace, means of idle gossiping or sly courtship. I have seen some turn their religious profession into a way of gratifying covetousness or indolence; and others, their skill in church-music, their knowledge, and their zeal, into various nets to catch esteem, admiration, and praise. Some have I seen making *yesterday's* faith a reason to laugh at the cross *to-day*; and others drawing from their misapprehensions of the atonement, arguments to be less importunate in secret prayer, and more conformable to this evil world, than once they were. Nay, I have seen some professing believers backward to do those works of mercy, which I have sometimes found persons, who made no professions of godliness, quite ready to perform. And oh! tell it in Sion, that watchfulness may not be neglected by believers, that fearfulness may seize upon backsliders, and that trembling may break the bones of hypocrites and apostates; I have seen those who had equally shined by their gifts and graces, strike the moral world with horror by the grossest Antinomianism; and disgrace the doctrine of *salvation through faith*, by the deepest plunges into scandalous sin.

Candid Reader, I need say no more, to make *thee* sensible of the necessity of the *additions* and *notes*, by which I have strengthened and guarded my old discourse, that it might be an *EQUAL Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism*, an equal prop to *faith* and *works*. If it afford thee any edification, give God the glory, and pray for the despised author. Ask, in the words of good Bishop Hopkins, that I may *SO BELIEVE, so rest on the merits of Christ, as if I had never wrought any thing; and withal so WORK, as if I were only to be saved by my own merits*. And O! ask it again and again, for I find it a difficult thing, to give to each of these its due in my practice. It is the very depth and height of Christian perfection.

POSTSCRIPT.

MADELEY, Jan. 10, 1774.

ABOVE fifteen years ago I looked into Baxter's Aphorisms on Justification, and through prejudice or sloth I soon laid them down, as being too deep for me. But a few days since a friend having brought me Mr. Wesley's extract of them, I have read it with much satisfaction, and present my readers with a compendium of my discourse in the words of those two judicious and laborious divines.

“As there are two covenants, with their distinct conditions; so is there a twofold righteousness, and both of them absolutely necessary to salvation.—Our righteousness of the first covenant, is not personal, or consisteth not in any actions performed by us; for we never personally satisfied the law' [of innocence] 'but it is wholly without us in Christ. In this sense every Christian disclaimeth his own righteousness, or his own works—Those only shall be in Christ legally righteous, who believe and obey the Gospel, and so are in themselves evangelically righteous.—Though Christ performed the conditions of the law' [of innocence] 'and satisfied for our non-performance, yet we ourselves must perform the conditions of the Gospel.—These two' [last] 'propositions seem to me so clear, that I wonder any able divines should deny them. Methinks they should be Articles of our Creed, and a part of children's catechisms. To affirm that our evangelical or new-covenant righteousness is *in Christ*, and not *in ourselves*; or performed by Christ, and not by ourselves; is such a monstrous piece of Antinomian doctrine, as no man who knows the nature and difference of the covenants can possibly entertain.' *Bax. Aphor. Prop. 14, 15, 16, 17.*



Salvation by the Covenant of Grace:

A DISCOURSE

ON ROMANS XI. 5, 6.

Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace: And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace: But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.

INTRODUCTION AND DIVISION.

THE Apostle complains in the preceding chapter, that Israel was blinded, and did not see the way of salvation: *I bear them record*, says he, Rom. x. 2, *that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; for being ignorant of God's righteousness, i. e. of God's way of saving sinners* merely through Jesus Christ, and going about to establish their own righteousness, that is, endeavouring to save*

(1) * When I say that God saves sinners “merely” through Jesus Christ, I do not exclude our *faith*, the *instrumental cause* of our salvation; nor our *works of faith*, the *evidencing cause* of it; any more than I exclude divine mercy. I only mean, that Christ is the *primary, meritorious cause* of our justification; and that from him, all *secondary, instrumental causes* receive whatever influence they have towards our eternal salvation. Nor do I take away from the Redeemer's glory, when I affirm, with the Rev. Mr. Madan, that “*we are justified instrumentally by faith, and declaratively by works:*” or that faith is the *instrumental*, and works the *declarative cause* of our complete justification. For as I speak of faith in Christ, *the light of men and Saviour of the world*; and as I mean *the works of that faith*; I secure his mediatorial honours; such works being all wrought through his influence, perfumed with his merits, and accepted through his intercession. Christ is then *all in all* still; the primary and meritorious cause passing through all the secondary, and instrumental causes, as light does through our windows and eyes; food through our mouths and stomachs; and vital blood through our arteries and veins.

N. B. The parts of this discourse, which are enclosed in brackets, [] are the additions that guard or strengthen the old sermon which my opponent calls for; and the parts contained between the two hands, { } are the passages, which he has extracted from it, and published at the end of his Finishing Stroke.

themselves by their own good works [so called, by works, which, strictly speaking, deserve rather to be named Pharisaical than good;] *they have not submitted to the righteousness of God—to that faith in Christ, which makes sinners righteous before God : for Christ, adds he, is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4 ; That is, [since the fall] it is the very design of the [Adamic] law, [the law of innocence given to sinless Adam ; yea, and of the Mosaic law, when it is considered as written in stones, and decorated with shadows or types of good things to come,] to bring men to believe in Christ for justification and salvation ; as he alone gives that pardon and life, which the law [of innocence] shows the want of, [and which the Mosaic law, abstracted from Gospel promises, points unto,] but cannot possibly bestow.*

The apostle, resuming the same subject in the chapter out of which the text is taken, comforts himself by considering, that, although Israel in general were blinded, yet *all* were not lost. Old Simeon and Anna had *seen the salvation of God*, and had *departed in peace*. Nicodemus, a doctor in Israel, had received the doctrine of the new birth and salvation by faith. *Three thousand Jews* had been *pricked to the heart* by penitential sorrow, and *filled with peace and joy by believing* in Jesus Christ. And *even at this present time*, says the Apostle, *there is a remnant [of my countrymen, saved] according to the election of grace : That is, There are some of them, who [like Nathanael and Nicodemus] casting away their dependence on their own righteousness, [and trusting only in Christ's merits] are numbered among the elect, according to that gracious decree of [election in Christ, which] God [has so clearly revealed] in the covenant of grace, He that believeth shall be saved, &c. Mark xvi. 16.**

From thence the apostle takes occasion to show, that pardon and salvation are not in whole or in part, attained by [the covenant of] works, but merely by [the covenant of] grace. *A remnant* of those self-righteous Pharisees *is saved*, [not indeed by their self-righteous-

(2) * My sentiment concerning *election*, is thus expressed by a great Calvinist minister. " In the written word a decree of God is found, " which shows who are the chosen and the saved people : *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved*. The chosen people therefore are a race of true believers, convinced by God's Spirit of their ruined estate, endowed with divine faith, by which they seek to Christ for help ; and seeking do obtain pardon, peace, and holiness." *The Christian World Unmasked*, Second Edit. p. 186. Judicious Christians will probably agree here with this pious divine, if he does not deny : 1. That in the divine decree of election the word BELIEVETH, excludes from the election those who *have cast off their first faith, or have made shipwreck of the faith* : And 2. That the word IS BAPTIZED, implies *professing the faith in word and work ; or making and standing to the baptismal vow, which respects not only believing the articles of the Christian faith, but also keeping God's holy will and commandments.*

ness,] but by the covenant of grace, [according to which we must equally part with our self-righteousness and our sins.] *And if by [the covenant of] grace, then it is no more [by that] of works, whether of the ceremonial law [of Moses,] or of the moral law [of innocence perverted to Pharisaic purposes;] else [the] grace [of Christ] is no longer grace [bestowed upon a criminal:] the very nature of [Gospel*] grace is lost. And if it be [by the covenant] of works, then it is no more [by Gospel] grace; else work is no longer [the] work [of a sinless creature,] but the very nature of it is destroyed [according to the first covenant, which requires perfect conformity to the law in the work, and perfect innocence in the worker.]*

As if the apostle had said, There is something so absolutely inconsistent between being saved by [the covenant of] grace, and being saved by [that of] works, that if you suppose either, you of necessity exclude the other: for what is given to works [upon the footing of the first covenant,] is [improperly speaking] the payment of a debt [which God, by his gracious promise, contracted with *innocent* mankind without the interposition of a Mediator:] whereas [Gospel] grace implies [not only] a favour [*strictly speaking*] unmerited [by us; but also an atoning sacrifice on the Redeemer's part, and a damnable demerit on our own:] so that the same benefit cannot, in the very nature of things, be derived from both [covenants.]

(3) * I say *Gospel grace*, because it is that which the apostle means. It may with propriety be distinguished from the *original grace* which Adam had before the fall, and which Deists and Pharisees still suppose themselves possessed of. Some people imagine, that if our first parents had well acquitted themselves in the trial of their faithfulness, their reward would *not* have been of *grace*; they would (*strictly speaking*) have *merited* heaven. But his is a mistake. From the Creator to the creature all blessings are, and must for ever be, of *grace*, of *mere* grace. Gabriel himself enjoys heaven through *free* grace. Unless some gracious promise interposes, God may this instant put an end, without injustice, not only to his glory, but to his very existence. Should you ask what difference there is, between *original* and *Gospel* grace, I answer, that original, *Adamic* grace naturally flowed from God, as *Creator* and *Preserver*, to *innocent, happy* creatures. But *Gospel* grace, that for which St. Paul so strenuously contends in my text, supernaturally flows from God, as *Redeemer* and *Comforter* to *guilty, wretched* mankind: and here let us take notice of the opposition there is, between Pharisaic and Evangelical obedience, between the *works of the law* and the *works of faith*. The former are done with a *proud* conceit of the *natural strength*, which man lost by the fall; and the latter, with an *humble* dependence on divine mercy through the Redeemer's merits; and on the *supernatural* power bestowed upon lost mankind for his sake. When St. Paul decries the works of the law, it is merely to recommend the works of faith: and yet, O the dreadful effects of confusion! in Babel people suppose, that he pours equal contempt upon both.

Having thus opened the context, I proceed to a more particular illustration of the text ; and that I may explain it as fully, as the time allotted for this discourse will permit.

FIRST, I shall premise an account of the two covenants : The covenant of *works*, to which the Pharisees of old trusted, and [most of] the Roman Catholics, with too many false Protestants, still trust in our days :—And the covenant of *grace*, by which alone a remnant was saved in St. Paul's time, and will be saved in all ages.

SECONDLY, I shall prove, that the way of salvation BY [obedient] FAITH ONLY, OR, which is the same thing, BY THE COVENANT OF GRACE, is the ONLY WAY that leads to life, according to the Scriptures and the articles of our church, to whose holy doctrine I shall publicly set my seal.

THIRDLY, I shall endeavour to show the unreasonableness and injustice of those, who accuse me of “ preaching against good works” when I [decry Pharisaic works, and] preach salvation through the covenant of grace only.

FOURTHLY and lastly, after having informed you, why [even] good works [truly so called] cannot * [properly] deserve salvation in whole or in part ; I shall answer the old objection of [some ignorant] Papists, [and Pharisaical Protestants.] “ If good works cannot†

(4) * I prefer *properly* to *absolutely*, the word which I formerly used, because *absolutely* bears too hard upon the second Gospel axiom, and turns out of the Gospel the *rewardable* condescency, that *our whole obedience*, even according to Dr. Owen, *hath unto eternal life, through God's gracious appointment*.

(5) † I say now *properly merit us heaven*, and not *save us, get us heaven*, or *procure us heaven*, expressions which occur a few times in my old sermon : because [taking the word *merit* in its full and proper sense] the phrase “ *cannot merit us heaven*,” leaves room to defend the necessity of evangelical obedience, and of the works of faith, by which we shall be saved, not indeed as being the first and properly meritorious cause of our salvation, (for to ascribe to them that honour would be to injure free grace, and place them on the Mediator's throne) but as being the secondary instrumental *cause* of our justification *in the great day*, and consequently of our *eternal* salvation.

Nor does the expression *properly merit us heaven* clash with such scriptures as these—*When the wicked man turneth from his iniquity, he shall save his soul alive—Save some with fear—Save thy husband—Save thy wife—We are saved by hope—Work out your own salvation.—He that converteth a sinner shall save a soul from death—Thy faith hath saved thee—In doing this thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee.* A preacher should do justice to every part of the Scripture. Nor should he blunt one edge of the sword of the Spirit, under pretence of making the other sharper. This I inadvertently did sometimes in the year 1762. May God endue me with wisdom that I may not do it in 1774 ! I find it the nicest thing in practical, as well as in polemical divinity, so to defend the doctrine of God's *free grace* as not to wound that of man's *faithful obedience*, and vice versa. These two doctrines support the two Gospel axioms, and may be called the *breasts* of the Church. A child of God, instead of peevishly biting the one or the other, should suck them alternately ; and a minister of Christ, instead of cutting off either, should carefully protect them both.

[properly merit us heaven,] why should we do them? There is no need to trouble ourselves about any."

Should any one object, that if Calvinism is supported by the Rev. Mr. Berridge's distinction between *1st* and *1st* [see the Fifth Check, 2d part:] the Gospel axioms, about which we make so much ado, have not a better foundation; since they depend upon a distinction between *original merit* and *derived merit*. I reply, that the distinction between legal *1st* and evangelical *1st*, is unworthy of Christ, and not less contrary to Scripture, than to reason and morality. On the contrary, the distinction between *original* or *proper merit*, and *derived* or *improper worthiness*, far from being frivolous, is scriptural, [see Fourth Check, p. 299, &c.] solid, highly honourable to Christ, greatly conducive to morality, very rational, and lying within the reach of the meanest capacity.

This will appear from the following propositions, which contain the sum of our doctrine concerning merit.—1. All *proper worthiness*, merit, or desert of any divine reward, is in Christ, the overflowing fountain of all original excellence.—2. If any of the living water of that rich spring is received by faith, and flows through the believer's heart and works, it forms *improper worthiness*, or *derived merit*; because, *properly speaking*, it is Christ's merit still.—3. *Original merit* answers to the *first* Gospel axiom, and *derived worthiness* to the *second*.—4. According to the first covenant we can never merit a reward, because of ourselves, as sinners, we deserve nothing but hell; and that covenant makes no provision of merit for hell-deserving sinners.—But, 5. According to the second covenant, by God's gracious appointment and merciful promise, we can, *improperly speaking*, be worthy of heaven, through the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our hearts, and through his righteousness derived to us and to our works by faith.—6. Hence it is, that God will give some, namely, impenitent murderers, blood to drink, *for they are worthy*, they *PROPERLY* deserve it; while others, namely, penitent believers, shall walk with Christ in white, *for they are worthy*, they *IMPROPERLY* merit it. Rev. xvi. 6 and iii. 4.

An illustration taken from a leaden pipe full of water, may show how it is possible, that *unworthy* man should become *worthy*, through the righteousness which Christ supplies believers with. Strictly speaking, water does not belong to a pipe, any more than merit or worthiness to a believer; for a pipe is only a number of *dry* sheets of lead soldered together; but if that *dry*, leaden pipe really receive some of the water, which a river supplies, I make myself ridiculous by asserting, that the man who hints there is water in the pipe confounds the elements, seeks to dry up the river, and is guilty of a dreadful philosophical heresy.

However, if our prepossessed brethren feel an invincible aversion to our Lord's word [*αἵτιος*] *meriting*, we are willing to become all things to them for his sake. If it may be a mean of restoring tranquillity to their minds, we cheerfully consent to use only the word of our translators, *worthy*; and here I give full leave to my readers, whenever they meet the noun *merit*, or the verb *to merit*, in my Checks, to read *worthiness* instead of the one, and *to be worthy* instead of the other. It may indeed puzzle unbiassed persons to find a difference between those expressions; but no matter. If others will expose their prejudice, we ought not only to maintain the truth, but to show our condescension. The word *Merit* is absolutely nothing to Mr. Wesley and me; but the doctrine of faithful obedience in Christ, and of the gracious rewards with which it shall be crowned for his sake, contains all our duty on earth, and draws after it all our bliss in heaven. Therefore, only grant us *truly* the second Gospel axiom:—grant us, that God has not appointed his creatures to endless *punishments* and heavenly *rewards* out of mere caprice:—grant us, that, while the wicked shall *PROPERLY* and *LEGALLY DESERVE* their own [and not Adam's] place in hell, the righteous shall *improperly* and *evangelically BE WORTHY TO OBTAIN THAT WORLD*, where they shall be equal to the angels, Luke xx. 35:—grant us that man is in a state of probation, and shall be recompensed *for*, and according to what he has done in the body, whether it be

PART FIRST.

I BEGIN by laying before you an account of the two [grand] covenants that God entered into with man. The first was made with Adam, when he was in a state of innocence in paradise. The condition of it, which is excessively hard, [nay, absolutely impossible] to fallen man, was easy before the fall. It runs thus: *Do this* [thou sinless man] *and live: The* [innocent] *man that does these things, shall live by them*, Rom. x. 5. That is, "If thou [who art now a guiltless, holy, and perfect creature] yield a constant, universal, and perfect obedience to the moral law," now summed up in the ten commandments, "thou shalt be rewarded with glory in heaven. But if thou fail in any one particular, whether it be in thought, word, or deed, thou shalt surely die, Gen. ii. 17. *for the soul that sinneth it shall die*, Ezek. xviii. 4. *The wages of sin is death*, Rom. vi. 23. And *cursed is every one, that continueth not in ALL things written in the book of the law to do them.*" Gal. iii. 10.

Nor does this covenant make any allowance for deficiencies, or pass by one transgression, great or little, without pronouncing the threatened curse; [for it made no provision for repentance, neither did it offer sinners the help of a sacrificing priest, or interceding mediator.] Whether therefore the sin be murder and adultery, or only eating some forbidden fruit, its language is,* *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*, James ii. 10. That is, All the curses denounced against those, who break the covenant of works, hang upon his guilty head, [and will fall upon him in a degree proportionable to the aggravations of his sin.]

This first covenant we have all broken in our first parents, for [in Adam all die]—*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*, Rom. v. 12. We are then all born [or conceived] in sin; Psalm li. 5. and consequently we are by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. But this is not all: this root of original sin, produces in every man many

good or bad:—In a word, grant us the capital doctrine of a day of retribution, in which God shall judge the world in wisdom and righteousness, not in solemn folly or satanical hypocrisy; and we ask no more.—This Note is a key to all the doctrines, which we maintain in the Minutes, and explain in the Checks.

(6) * Whoever reads the Scriptures without prejudice, will be of Mr. Burgess's mind concerning this awful text. [See Fourth Check, p. 231.] It was evidently spoken with reference to *Christ's law of liberty*, as well as some of the passages quoted in the preceding paragraph: and if they guard even that law: how much more the law of innocence, which, though it cannot be holier in its precepts, is yet much more peremptory in its curses!

actual iniquities, whereby, as we imitate Adam's rebellion, so we make the guilt of it our own, and fasten the curse attending that guilt upon our own souls. Rom vii. 24.

Therefore, while we remain in our natural state, [or, to speak more intelligibly, while we continue in sin, guilt, and *total* impenitency, we not only trample the covenant of grace under foot, but] we stand upon the [broken] covenant of works; and consequently lie under the dreadful curse, which is already denounced against every transgressor of the law, Gal. iii. 10, [as well as against every despiser of the Gospel, Heb. x. 27.]

Hence it is that, *by the deeds of the law*, i. e. by the [unsprinkled] good works commanded in the law [of innocence; or by the ceremonies prescribed in the law of Moses,] *shall no flesh living* [no sinner] *be justified*: for as many as are of the works of the law, [as it stands opposed to the Gospel; yea, as many also as rest, like the impenitent Pharisees, in the letter of the Mosaic law,] *are under the curse*; the *Scripture having concluded all under sin*, [i. e. testified that all are sinners by conception and practice] and consequently under the curse [of the first covenant,] *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty*, [i. e. may humbly confess their fallen and lost estate] *before God*, [and gladly accept his offers of mercy in the second covenant.] Rom. iii. 19, 20.

In this deplorable state of guilt and danger, we [generally] remain careless and insensible, [when we have once taken to the ways of vanity] ↵ making what we call "*the mercy of God*" a pack-horse [if I may use so coarse an expression] to carry us and our sins to heaven, upon the *filthy rags** of our own [Pharisaic] righteousness. ↵ Here we continue, till divine grace awakens us, by the preaching of the Gospel, or by some other means. Eph. v. 14. Being then roused to a serious consideration of our fallen state in Adam, and to a sensibility of the curse which we lie under, through our numerous breaches of [the second, as well as of] the first covenant; after many fruitless attempts to remove that curse, by fulfilling the law [of innocence;] after many [faithless] endeavours to save ourselves by our own [anti-evangelical] works, and righteousness, ↵ we despair at last of getting to heaven, by building a babel with the *untempered mortar* of our own [fancied] sincerity, and the bricks of our wretched good works, [or rather of our splendid sins.] ↵ And leaving the impassable road of the covenant of works, we begin to seek [as condemned criminals]

(7) * Here that expression is used in the scriptural sense.

the way, which God's free mercy has opened for *lost sinners* in Jesus Christ. Acts ii. 37. Phil. iii. 6, &c.

This *new and living way*, [for I may call it by the name which the apostle emphatically gives to the last dispensation of the Gospel] Heb. x. 19, 20. is the new covenant, the covenant of grace [in its various editions or dispensations. For, if the Christian edition is called *new* in opposition to the Jewish, all the editions together may well be] called *new*, in opposition to the old covenant, the covenant of works [made with Adam before the fall.] It is also termed *Gospel*, that is, *glad tidings*, because [*with different degrees of evidence] it brings comfortable news of free salvation in Christ, to all that see they are undone in themselves.

(8) * This and the preceding clauses are added to guard the doctrine of the Gospel dispensations, of which I had but very confused views eleven years ago. See Third Check, Vol. i. p. 172, &c. Leaning then too much towards Calvinism, I fancied, at times at least, that the *Gospel* was confined within the narrow channel of its last dispensation; which was as absurd as if I had imagined, that the swell of our rivers at high water is *all* the ocean. But turning to my Bible, and "reviewing the whole affair," I clearly see, that the Jewish and Christian Gospel are not *the everlasting Gospel*, but only two of its brightest dispensations. Should the reader ask me what I mean by *the everlasting Gospel*, when I consider it in its full latitude: I answer, that I mean with St. Paul, *The riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, leading men to repentance* for Christ's sake, who in all ages is the *Saviour of the world*.—Yea, and the severe strokes of his gracious providence *driving* them to it. I dare not insinuate, that Jonah, one of the most successful preachers in the world, was not a *Gospel preacher*, when he stirred up all the people of Nineveh to repentance, by the fear of impending destruction; and that St. John the divine was a stranger to true divinity, when he gave us the following account of the manner, in which a celestial Evangelist preached the everlasting Gospel. *I saw another angel, having the EVERLASTING GOSPEL to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, [Here is free grace!] saying with a loud voice: Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment, as well as of his mercy, is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.* Here is, if I am not mistaken, the Gospel, according to which *many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down* at the heavenly feast with the Father of the faithful, when the unloving Pharisees *shall be thrust out!* notwithstanding their great ado about *absolute election*. This note will probably touch the apple of my reader's eye, if he be a rigid predestinarian. But if he be offended, I entreat him to consider, whether his love does not bear some resemblance to the charity of those strong predestinarians of old, those monopolizers of God's election, who despised poor sinners of the *Gentiles*. How violent was their prejudice! They vastly admired our Lord's sermon at Nazareth, till he touched the sore that festered in their strait-laced breast. But no sooner did he insinuate, that their election was not yet made sure, and that the poor Pagan widow of Sarepta, and Naaman the Syrian were not absolute reprobates; than *they were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong.* He had touched their great Diana, and therefore, to be sure, he had committed the unpardonable sin; he had spoken treason, heresy, blasphemy. See Luke iv. 28.

✂ The second covenant then, or the Gospel, is a dispensation of free grace and mercy [not only to little children, of whom is the kingdom of heaven, but also] to poor, lost, helpless sinners, who, seeing and feeling themselves condemned by the law [of innocence, and utterly unable to obtain justification upon the terms of the FIRST covenant, came to [a merciful God through] Jesus Christ [the light of men, according to the helps afforded them in the dispensation which they are under.] so to seek in him [and from him those merits and] that righteousness, which they have not in themselves. For the Son of God, being both God and man in one person; and by the invaluable sacrifice of himself upon the cross, having suffered the punishment due to all our breaches of the law [of works;] and by his most holy life having answered all the demands of the *FIRST COVENANT, God can be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus, Rom. iii. 26. ✂ Therefore, if a sinner, whose mouth is stopped, and who has nothing to pay, pleads from the heart the atoning blood of Christ [and supposing he never heard that precious name, if, according to his light, he implores *divine mercy*, for the free exercise of which Christ's blood has made way] not only God will not deliver him to the tormentors, but will frankly forgive him all. Luke vii. 41, &c.

✂ Herein then consists the great difference between the first and the second covenant. Under the *first*, an absolute, unsinning, universal obedience in our own persons is required; and such obedience

(9) * Although there were some very unguarded passages in my original sermon, yet, what was unguarded in one place, was in a great degree guarded in another. Thus even in this paragraph, which is the first that Mr. Hill produces in his extract, by saying that *Christ has answered all the demands of the first covenant* for believers, I indirectly assert, that he has not answered the demands of the *second*; and that according to the Gospel, we must personally repent, believe, and obey, to be *finally* accepted: the covenant of *grace* insisting as much upon the *works of faith*, as the covenant of *works* did upon the *works of the law* of innocence, in order to our *continuance* and *progress* in the divine favour. A doctrine this which is the ground of the Minutes, the quintessence of the Checks, and the downfall of Antinomianism. It was *only* with respect to the covenant of works, and to the law of innocence, that I said in the next paragraph, transposed by Mr. Hill, "This obedience—when we are united to Christ by a faith of the operation of God, is *ACCEPTED INSTEAD OF OUR OWN*." How greatly then does he mistake me, when he supposes I asserted that the personal, Adamic, and (in one sense) anti-evangelical obedience of Christ, which sprang neither from Gospel faith nor from Gospel repentance, is *accepted instead of the personal, penitential, evangelical obedience of believers*! It is just here that the Calvinists turn aside from the truth, to make void the law of Christ, and follow Antinomian dotages. Because Christ has fulfilled the Adamic law of innocence for us, they fancy that he has also fulfilled his own evangelical law of Gospel obedience, according to which we must stand or fall, *when by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned*.

we, [in our fallen state,] can never perform.—Under the second covenant, this obedience [to the law of innocence, paid by, and] in our surety, Christ Jesus, when we are united to him by a faith of the operation of God, is accepted instead of our own. — For [as our sins were transferred upon the Redeemer's guiltless head, so his merits are brought home to our guilty souls by the powerful operation of divine grace through faith, and being thus *complete in Christ** [with regard to the fulfilling of the FIRST covenant,] we can rejoice in God, who has made him unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. [I say, with regard to the fulfilling of the FIRST covenant, to guard against the error of thousands, who vainly imagine that Christ has fulfilled the terms of the second covenant for us, and talk of finished salvation, just as if our Lord had actually repented of our sins, believed in his own blood, and fulfilled his own evangelical law in our stead; a fatal error this, which makes Christians lawless, represents Christ as the minister of sin, and arms the Antinomian fiend with a dreadful axe, to fell the trees of righteousness, and cut down the very pillars of the house of God.]

From what has been observed it follows, that before any one can believe [to salvation] in the Gospel sense of the word, he must be

(10) * If I say that penitent believers are complete in Christ with respect to the first covenant, I do not intimate that fallen believers, who crucify the Son of God afresh, may even commit deliberate murder, and remain complete in him, or rather (as the original means also) filled with him. Far be the horrid insinuation from the pen and heart of a Christian. I readily grant that true believers are not less dead to the Adamic law of innocence, than to the ceremonial law of Moses; and that, with respect to it, they heartily say as David, *Enter not into judgment with thy servants, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* But mistake me not: I would not insinuate that they are lawless, or only under a rule of life, which they may break without endangering their salvation. No: they are under the law of Christ, the law of liberty, the law of the spirit of life, the Royal law of Gospel holiness; and according to this law, they shall all be rewarded or punished in the day of judgment. Although this law admits of repentance after a fall, at least during the day of salvation; and although it does not condemn us, for not obeying above our present measure of power; yet it does not make the least allowance for wilful sin, any more than the Adamic law; for St. James informs a believer, that *if he offend in one point he is guilty of all.* And indeed our Lord's parable confirms this awful declaration. The favoured servant who had the immense debt of ten thousand talents forgiven him, sinned against Christ's law only in one point, namely, in refusing to have mercy on his fellow-servant, as his Lord had had compassion upon him; and for that one offence he was delivered to the tormentors, as notoriously guilty of breaking the whole law of liberty and love. *If he who despised the law of Moses, perished under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who despises the law of Christ.* This is the ground of the epistle to the Hebrews; but who considers it? Who believes, that the Son of God will command even the unprofitable servant to be cut asunder? *When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth?* Lord! help my unbelief.

convinced of sin by the spirit of God, John xvi. 8. He must feel himself a guilty, lost, and helpless sinner, unable to recover the favour and image of God by his own strength and righteousness, Acts ii. 37, 38.

This conviction and sense of guilt make the sinner *come travelling and heavy laden to Christ*, earnestly claiming the *rest* which he offers to weary souls, Matt. xi. 28. This rest the mourner seeks with the contrite publican, in the constant use of all the means of grace; endeavouring to *bring forth fruit meet for repentance*, till the same Spirit that had convinced him of sin, and alarmed his drowsy conscience, *convinces him also of righteousness*, John xvi. 8. that is, shows him the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's [merits or] righteousness, to swallow up his [former* sins, and] unrighteousness; and the infinite value of Christ's meritorious death, to atone for his [past*] unholy life; enabling him to *believe with the HEART*, and consequently to *feel* that he has an interest in the Redeemer's blood and righteousness; [or, that he is savingly interested in the merit of all that the Son of God suffered, did, and continues to do for us.]

This lively faith, this *faith† working by love*, is that which is imputed for righteousness, Rom. iv. 3. and that whereby a soul is born of God [according to the‡ Christian dispensation of the Gospel, 1 John v. 1.

(11) * Without the words *former* and *past*, the sentence leaned towards Antinomianism. It gave fallen believers room to conclude, that their *future* or *present* unholy lives were unconditionally atoned for; contrary to St. Paul's unguarded Gospel, *God has sent forth Christ to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins THAT ARE PAST*. Here is no pleasing inuendo, that the present, or future sins of Laodicean backsliders, "are for ever and for ever cancelled."

(12) † This is the very doctrine of the *Minutes* and of the *Checks*. Is it not astonishing, that Mr. Hill should desire me to publish my sermon, as "*the best confutation*" of both!

(13) ‡ The judicious reader will easily perceive, that the additions made to this, and some other paragraphs of my old sermon, are intended to guard the inferior dispensations of the Gospel. Are there not degrees of saving faith, inferior to the faith of the Christian Gospel? And are not those degrees of faith consistent with the most profound ignorance of the history of our Lord's sufferings, and consequently of any *explicit* knowledge of the atonement. Although mankind in general had some consciousness of guilt, and a confused idea of propitiatory sacrifices; and although all the Jewish sacrifices and prophecies pointed to the great atonement; yet how few, even among the pious Jews, seem to have had a clear belief that the Messiah would *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*! How unreasonable is it then to confine the Gospel to the explicit knowledge of Christ's atoning sufferings, to which both the prophets and apostles were once such strangers! Does not St. Peter intimate that *the prophets searched to little purpose, what the Spirit signified, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ*; since it was revealed to them, that *not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things, which are now reported in the Christian Gospel*? 1 Peter i. 11, 12. And how absurd is it to suppose, that nothing is Gospel, but a doctrine, which the first preachers of the Christian Gospel knew little or nothing of, even while they preached the Gospel under our Lord's immediate direction? Did not John the Baptist exceed in evangelical knowledge, *all that were born of women*?

By this faith the [Christian] believer being [strongly] united to Christ, as a member to the body, becomes entitled to [a much larger share in] the benefit of all that our Lord did and suffered; and in consequence of this [strong] vital union with him, who is the source of all goodness, he derives a [degree of] power till then unknown, to do good works truly so called: as a graft, which is [strongly] united to the stock that bears it, draws from it new sap, and power to bring forth fruit in [greater] abundance.

[O thou that professest the Christian faith, especially,] *show me thy faith by thy works*, says an apostle: that is, Show me that thou art grafted in Christ [according to the Christian dispensation] by serving God with all thy strength; by doing all the good thou canst to the souls and bodies of men with cheerfulness; by suffering wrong and contempt with meekness; by slighting earthly joys, mortifying fleshly lusts, having thy conversation in heaven, and panting every hour after a closer union with Christ, the life of all believers. If thou dost not bring forth these fruits, thou art not a Christian; thou art not *in Christ a new creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. Thou mayest talk of faith, and

Were the apostles much inferior to him, when they had been three years in Christ's school? Did not our Lord say to them, *Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear; for verily many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things that ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that ye hear, and have not heard them?* Again, did he not testify, that in general they had justifying faith, i. e. faith working by love? Did he not say, *Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you—The Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and believed that I came forth from God?* Nay, did he not send them two and two, to preach *The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent and believe THE GOSPEL?* And would he have sent them to preach a Gospel to which they were utter strangers? But were they not perfectly strangers to what passes now for the *only* Gospel? Had they the least idea that their Master's blood was to be shed for them, even after he had said, *This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins?* When he spoke to them of his sufferings, were not they so far from believing in the atonement which he was about to make, that they were offended at the very idea? Is not this evident from the words of Peter, their chief speaker, who began to rebuke him, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not happen unto thee:* i. e. We do not yet see the need of thy blood? Nay, when Christ had actually shed it, and the *atonement* work was *finished*; far from having the least notion about what is called "*finished salvation*," and "*Gospel*" in our day; did they not suppose that all their hopes were blasted, saying, *We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel*, Luke xxiv. 21.? Thus the very payment of their ransom made them despair of redemption: so great was their ignorance of the doctrine of the atonement, notwithstanding their Gospel knowledge, which far exceeded that of most patriarchs and prophets! From these observations may I not conclude: 1. That an explicit knowledge of Christ's passion and atonement, is the prerogative of the *Christian* Gospel advancing towards perfection? And 2. That those who make it essential to the *everlasting* Gospel, most dreadfully curtail it, and indirectly doom to hell, not only all the righteous Jews, Turks, and Heathens, who may now be alive; but also almost all the believers, who died before our Lord's crucifixion, and some of the disciples themselves after his resurrection?

suppose that thou believest; but give me leave to tell thee, that [unless thou art in the case of the eunuch, who searched the Scriptures even upon a journey; or of Cornelius, who sought the Lord in alms-givings and prayer;] if thou believest at all, [I fear] it is with the drunkard's faith, the whoremonger's faith, the devil's faith, James ii. 19.—From such a faith, may God deliver us, and give us, instead of this counterfeit, *the faith once delivered unto the saints, the mystery of faith kept in a pure conscience!* Get it, O sinner, who bearest a Christian name, and Christ and heaven are thine: [but if thou] die without it, [whether it be by continuing in thy present sin and unbelief, or by *making shipwreck of thy faith,*] thou diest the second death; thou sinkest in the bottomless pit for evermore. Mark xvi. 16.

Having thus given you an account of both covenants, and laid before you the *condition* [or term] of each; namely, for the *first*, a sinless, uninterrupted obedience to all the commands of the holy, spiritual, [and Adamic] law of God, performed by ourselves without the least [mediatorial assistance:] and for the *second*, a lively faith in Christ [*the light of the world*, according to the Gospel dispensation we are under;] by which faith, the virtue of Christ's active and passive obedience to the law [of innocence] being imputed to us, and applied to our hearts, we are made *new creatures, born again, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, without which there can be no lively faith [under any of the divine dispensations:] and having [by that important distinction of the two grand covenants] removed a great deal of rubbish out of the way: I hope it will not be difficult to prove under the

SECOND HEAD,

THAT the way of salvation by such a lively faith only, or, which is the same, by the covenant of grace [alone,] is the one way that leads to life, according to the Bible and our articles of religion.

If you ask all the Pharisees, all the self-righteous Heathens, Turks, Jews, and Papists, in the world, which is the way of salvation? [with too many ignorant Protestants] they will answer, [without making the least mention of repentance and faith] “through doing good works, and leading a good life:” that is, “through the covenant of works;” flatly contrary to what, I have proved in the first part of this discourse, namely, that *by the works of the law*, by the first covenant, *shall no flesh living be justified*, Gal. ii. 16. Or if they have yet some sense of modesty, if they are not quite lost in pride, [supposing them Christians] they will varnish over the blasphemy [which I fear

is indirectly couched under their boasting speech,] with two or three words about God's mercy. "Why, (say they) it is to be hoped, we shall all be saved by endeavouring to lead good lives, and do good works: and if that will not do, God's mercy in Christ will do the rest." Which means neither more nor less than this: "We are still to be saved by the covenant of works, by putting on, [sinful and guilty as we are,] the robe of our own [Pharisaic, anti-evangelical, Christless] righteousness; and if it happen to be too short, or to have some holes, Christ [whom we are willing to make the *omega*, but not the *alpha*; the *last*, but not the *first*,] will, in mercy, tear his spotless robe [of merits,] to patch up and lengthen ours." [And this, they say, it is to be feared, without the least degree of *genuine* repentance towards God, and *heartfelt* faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.] O how many dream of getting to heaven in this fool's coat, [this absurd dress of a Christian Pharisee!] How many, by thus blending the two covenants, which are as incompatible as fire and water, try to make for themselves a third covenant, that never existed but in their proud imagination! In a word, how many are there, who say or think: We must be saved partly by [the covenant of] works, and partly by [the covenant of] grace! giving the lie to God and my text! overturning at once the Gospel and Protestantism!—No, no: if a *remnant is saved*, it is by the covenant of grace; and if by grace, then it is no more [by the covenant] of works; otherwise grace is no more [Gospel] grace. But if it be [by the covenant] of works, then it is no more [Gospel] grace; otherwise work is no more work: [for the moment obedience is *the work of faith*, it can no more be opposed to faith and Gospel grace, than the fruit of a tree can be opposed to the tree, and the sap by which it is produced.]

But, to the *law and the testimony*! Do the oracles of God, or the writings of our reformers, direct us for salvation to the covenant of works, or to a third covenant of [anti-evangelical*] works and [evangelical] grace patched up together? Do they not entirely and invariably point us to the covenant of grace alone?

(14) * I add the word *anti-evangelical*, to point out the rise of the mistake of some pious Protestants, who, being carried away by an injudicious zeal for the first Gospel axiom, and misled by the conciseness of the apostle's style, get upon the pinnacle of the Antinomian Babel, and thence decry *all* works in general; unhappily quoting St. Paul in confirmation of their error. Although it is evident that the apostle never excluded from the Gospel plan of salvation by grace, any works but the *works of unbelief*, and sometimes pleaded for the *works of faith*, and for the immense rewards, with which they shall be crowned, in far stronger terms than St. James himself; denouncing *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon EVERY SOUL of man that neglects them, or doth evil*. Rom. ii.

Hear first the word of the Lord. *He that BELIEVETH on the Son* [according to the light of the dispensation he is under] *hath everlasting life: He that BELIEVETH NOT, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him,* John iii. 36.—When the trembling jailer cries out, *What must I do to be saved?* Paul and Silas answer, *BELIEVE in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,* Acts xvi. 31.—God so loved the world, says St. John, *that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever BELIEVETH in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,* John iii. 16.—By GRACE, says St. Paul, *ye are [initially] saved through FAITH, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not [by the covenant] of works, [nor yet by the proper merit of any works,] lest any man should boast [as the Pharisee; all who despise the way of faith, and put the instrumental causes in the room of the first and properly meritorious cause of our salvation, being no better than boasting Pharisees.] For to him that worketh [without applying to the throne of grace, as a hell-deserving sinner] is the reward not reckoned of [evangelical] grace, but of [legal] debt: but to him that worketh not [upon the footing of the first covenant;] to him who sees that he cannot [escape hell, much less] get heaven, by [setting] his good works, [if he has any, on the Redeemer's throne;] but believeth [as a lost sinner,] on him that justifieth the ungodly; his FAITH is counted for righteousness: he is saved by [obedient] FAITH, which is the CONDITION of the covenant of grace,* Rom. iv. 4.

Thus speak the Scriptures, and blessed be God! thus speak also our Liturgy and Articles.

In the *absolution* the priest declares, that [in the day of conversion] *God pardoneth and absolveth, that is, saveth, not those* ☞ [moralists] *who [being ashamed to repent, and scorning to believe the Gospel, endeavour to] lead a good life to get a pardon [by their own merits:]* ☞ but *all those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe in his holy Gospel; that is, all those, who, by true repentance renounce [together with their sins] all dependence upon the covenant of works; and by a faith unfeigned flee for refuge only to [God's mercy in Christ, which is so kindly offered to sinners in] the covenant of grace. Hence it is, that in the communion-service we are commanded to pray, That by the merits and death of Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all the whole church, may obtain remission of sins, and all other benefits of his passion.*

This holy doctrine is most clearly maintained, and strongly established in the ixth, xth, xith, xiith, and xiiith, of our Articles of religion. And upon these five pillars, it will remain unshaken as long as the Church of England shall stand.

The ixth shows, that since the fall of Adam, "*the corruption of our nature deserves God's wrath and damnation;*" so that [being considered without the free gift, that came upon all men in Christ unto justification of life, Rom. v. 18.] we are of ourselves, evil trees ready for the axe of death, and the fire of hell.

The xth adds, that we cannot consequently get grace and glory, that is, save ourselves, by bearing good fruit [through our original powers, according to the first covenant] because an evil tree can only produce evil fruit:—[And that "*we have no power to do works acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us,*" according to the second covenant.]

The xith affirms, that we are saved, that is, accepted of God, changed, and made good trees, trees of the Lord's planting, *only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings*: ☞ as we can do no good works before we are [at least] in a state of [initial] salvation. ☞ *Make the tree good, says our Lord, and its fruit shall be good.* [In our infancy we are freely blessed with a seed of light from Christ, the light of men; and at the same time we are freely justified from the damning guilt of original corruption, As we grow up, and personally repent and believe in the light after a personal fall, we are again freely pardoned. Thus, so long at least, as the accepted time, and the day of salvation last] God has first respect to our persons in Christ, and then to our sacrifices or works [of faith.] Heb. xi. 4. Gen. iv. 4, 5.

The xiith declares, that good works, works which necessarily follow free justification, do not serve to put away [or atone for] sins; but to declare the truth of our faith: "*insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.*" A tree is first planted, and then it brings forth fruit: ☞ a believer is first saved, [i. e. freely made partaker of initial salvation] and then he does good works. ☞ [A lively faith necessarily produces them, though a believer does not necessarily persevere in a lively faith: if he do them not his faith is dead; it is not [now a living and] saving faith, he is no [longer an obedient] believer; [but an Antinomian or an apostate, a Demas or a Judas.]

The xiiiith insists upon that point of doctrine, which confounds the Pharisees in all ages, and lays our virtuous pride in the dust before God: namely that, [when we have sinned away the justification * of

(15) * Those who start at every expression they are not used to, will ask if our Church admits the justification of infants. I answer: Undoubtedly, since her clergy by her direction say over myriads of infants, "*We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it has pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy holy Spirit, to receive him for thy*

infants] *Of works done before [that] justification [is restored.] before faith alone has put us [again] into a state of [initial] salvation, not only do not fit us to receive grace, but have in themselves the nature of sin, [nay, the worst of sins, spiritual pride, and Pharisaic hypocrisy:] and consequently deserve death, the wages of sin, so far [are they] from meriting grace and glory.* ↪

This is agreeable to reason as well as to Scripture ; for if, *of ourselves*, as says our Church, [i. e. before any degree of grace is instilled into our infant hearts, or before God freely visits us again when we have personally fallen away from him,] *we cannot by our good works, so called, prepare ourselves to faith : If we are such crab-trees, as can bring forth no apples, [without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will, it is plain that] by producing as many crabs, [i. e. as many works of unbelief] as [blaspheming] Paul before his conversion ; and of as fine a colour, and as large ■ size, as those which the self-righteous Pharisee bore : we cannot change our own nature, nor force from ourselves the sweet fruit of one [truly] good work : ‘ Many who have not the true faith,’ says our Church, yet flourish in works of mercy. But they that shine in good works [so called] without faith, are like dead men, who have goodly and precious tombs : or, to carry on the allegory of our Reformers, the fine crabs which such people produce, please the eye of the spectator, who thinks them good apples ; but God, who sees their hearts, tastes in the deceitful fruit, nothing but the sourness of ■ crab. Such crabs are the alms of whoremongers, the prayers of unjust persons, the public worship of swearers and drunkards, the tithes and fasts* of Pharisees. Isa. i. 11, &c.*

own child, &c. And in her catechism she teaches all children to say, as soon as they can speak, *I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this state of salvation.* If my objector urges, that our Church puts those words only in the mouth of baptized children ; I reply ; True, because she instructs no others. But why does she admit to baptism *all* the children that are born within her pale ? Does she not vindicate her practice in this respect by an appeal to our Lord’s kind command ; “ *Let little children come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven ?* ” This I had not considered when I said in my *Appeal*, that our Church returns thanks for the regeneration of baptized infants *only* [I should have said *chiefly*] upon a charitable supposition, &c. For it is evident that she does it also upon Christ’s gracious declaration, Mark x. 13, &c. the precious Gospel of her office, upon which she comments in a manner most favourable to children ; concluding her charge on the occasion by these words ; *Wherefore, we being thus persuaded of the good will of our heavenly Father towards this [unbaptized] infant, declared by his Son Jesus Christ, and nothing doubting, &c.* These words I had not attended to, when I wrote my *Appeal*. I take this first opportunity of acknowledging my mistake, which shall be rectified in the next edition.

(16) * Here is a short enumeration of good works, so called, which I decry in this sermon. Had my opponent considered it, he would never have supposed that my discourse

✂ Having thus shown you, how self-righteous, unawakened sinners dream of salvation, either by the covenant of works, or by a third imaginary covenant, in which two incompatible things [Pharisaical] works and [evangelical] grace, [antichristian] merits and mercy [in Christ] are jumbled together; and having proved by plain, unanswerable passages, and by the 39 Articles, that the Gospel and our Church show us, salvation cannot be attained, but under the second covenant, that is, *by [obedient] faith only*, and not by [the covenant of] works; I beg leave to recapitulate the whole in three articles, which contain the sum of the Gospel, and of the doctrine that I have constantly preached among you, and am determined to preach, God being my helper, till my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,* [unless a flaw can be found] in any of them, by the word of God or the articles of our Church. ↪

Upon the proofs before advanced, I solemnly declare and publicly affirm: 1. That there is no salvation to be attained by [the covenant of] works since the fall. The best man having broken a hundred times the first covenant, deserves a hundred times damnation by his works, and can no more be saved from hell by his obedience to God's law [of innocence] than a thief can be saved from the gallows, by the civil law which condemns him to be hanged.

2. Respecting the primary and properly meritorious cause of our salvation, [from first to last] *we are saved*, as it is written in our eleventh Article, *only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our works or deservings*: And that [in the day of conversion] *we are justified by faith only*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort: yea the only doctrine that can melt down the hearts of sinners, and make them constantly zealous of all sorts of good works, [if it be not made to supercede the justification of believers by the evidence of works, both in the day of trial and in the day of judgment. A doctrine this, which few Antinomians are daring enough directly to oppose.]

3. As all mankind are condemned by the covenant of works, *he that believeth not* [in the light of his dispensation] *being condemned*

is "the best refutation" of what I have advanced in the Checks, in favour of the good works maintained by St. James and Mr. Wesley.

(17) * The words enclosed in brackets are in my manuscript, and were written several years ago, when, looking over my sermon, I thought they savoured more of Christian modesty than those which Mr. Hill has in his copy: [And here I give a public challenge to any man living to find a flaw] I challenge no body now, but I promise, that if any man living will be kind enough to show me my errors by plain Scripture, and solid argument, he shall have my sincere thanks. For if I know my heart, pure and unmixed truth is the object of my desires, and controversial pursuits:

already: and as by the covenant of grace there is no salvation to be had but in Christ through faith, so there is no mixing those two covenants without renouncing Christ and his Gospel. He that stands with one foot upon the covenant of works, and with the other foot upon the covenant of grace; [he that talks of divine mercy, while his heart continues as regardless of it as if he were sinless; he that ends his prayers by the name of Christ, while he remains unconcerned about his fallen state,] is in the most imminent danger of eternal ruin. He that says, "I will do first what I can to merit heaven; I will do my best; and Christ, I hope, will do the rest; and God, I trust, will have mercy upon me," is yet without God, and without Christ in the world; he knows neither the nature of God's law, nor that of Christ's Gospel.

[This is, my dear hearers, the substance of the *three articles*, which, eleven years ago, I publicly laid down in this Church, as the ground of the doctrine which I had preached, and was determined still to preach among you. And I solemnly declare, that, to this day, I have not seen the least cause to *reject* any one of them as erroneous. Though I must confess, that I have found abundant reason particularly to *guard* the second, against the daring attacks, that Antinomians in principle, or in practice, make upon St. James's undefiled religion. To return:]

We are undoubtedly obliged to do what we can, and to use the means of grace at all [proper] times and in all [convenient] places; but, to rest in those means [like the Pharisees;] to suppose that they will save us; and upon this supposition to be easy without the experience of [converting] grace in our hearts, is very absurd. It is a mistake as foolish as that of the man, who supposes that his garden will be the more fruitful for pipes which convey no water; or that his body can be refreshed by empty cups.

The language of a penitent sinner is, "Lord, I pray, and hear [thy word;] I fast, and receive the commemorative tokens of thy passion; I give alms, and keep the Sabbath; but after all, *I am an unprofitable servant*.—[I must *work out* my own salvation with fear and trembling, and yet] *without thee I can do nothing*; I cannot change my heart; I cannot root up from my breast the desire of praise, the thirst of pleasure, and the hankering after gold, vanity, beauty, or sensual gratifications which I continually feel; I cannot force my stubborn heart to repent, believe, and love; to be meek and lowly, calm and devout. Lord, deliver me from this body of death; *Lord, save, or I perish*."

Christ will have all the glory [worthy of him] or none. We must be* wholly saved by him, or lost for ever : [for although we must be *co-workers with him*, by walking religiously in good works ; and if we are not, we shall have our portion with the *workers of iniquity* ; yet it is *he* that *worketh in us*, as in moral agents, *both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. It is he that appoints, and blesses all the inferior means of our salvation, therefore all the glory properly and originally belongs to him alone.]

[All our pardons flow down to us, in the streams of his precious blood. All our life, light, and power, are nothing but emanations from him, who is the *Fountain of life, the Sun of righteousness, the Wisdom and Power of God*, and in a word, *Jehovah our righteousness*. All that *gracious rewardableness* of the works of faith ; all that *aptitude* of our sprinkled obedience unto eternal life ; all that *being worthy* which he himself condescends to speak of, Rev iii. 4. and Luke xx. 35. spring not only from his *gracious appointment*, but from his overflowing merits. A comparison will illustrate my meaning.]

[You see the cheerful light that flows in upon us through those windows, and renders the glass as bright as this spring day. You know that this brightness in the glass is not from the glass, which was totally dark some hours ago ; a fit emblem THEN of the *works of darkness*, the works of unbelief : such works being as much devoid of rewardableness, as those panes were of light at midnight. Let us not forget then, that if our works are graciously rewarded it is only when they are the works of *faith*, whose peculiar property it is *freely* to admit the merits of Christ, and the beams of the *Sun of righteousness* ; just as it is the property of the transparent matter, which composes these windows, *necessarily* to admit the genial warmth and cheerful rays of the natural sun.]

[If I admire a poor widow, gladly casting her last mite into the treasury ; or a martyr, generously giving his body to blood-thirsty executioners ; it is only because their lively faith receives, and their pure charity reflects, the light of him, who for our sake became poor ; and for our sake joyfully surrendered to his bloody murderers. But although this image of our Lord's meritorious holiness and sufferings, does great honour to the saints who reflect it : yet, the praise of it originally and properly belongs to him alone.]

(18) * See the first note upon the word *merely*.—N. B. Here begins the greatest addition to my old sermon. It is in favour of *free grace*, and runs through fourteen paragraphs.

[An illustration will make you sensible of it. You have seen a glass perfectly reflecting the beauty of a person placed over against it; you have admired the elegant proportion of features which composed her beauty: but did you ever see any man so void of good sense, as to suppose that the beauty was *originally* in the glass which reflected it; or that the lovely appearance existed without depending on its original; or that it robbed the living beauty of her peculiar glory? And shall any, on the one hand, be so full of voluntary humility, as to maintain, that Christ is dishonoured by the *derived worthiness* of the works of *faith*, whose office it is to receive, embrace, and trust in the Redeemer's *original and proper merit*? Shall any, on the other hand, be so full of Pharisaic pride as to fancy, that the distinguishing excellence of our good works, if we have any, springs from, or terminates in, ourselves? No, my brethren: as rivers flow back to the sea, and lose themselves in that immense reservoir of waters, whence they had their origin; so let all the "rewardable condecency"* of our evangelical obedience flow back to, and lose itself in, the boundless and bottomless ocean of our Lord's *original and proper merits*.]

He, He alone is worthy—*properly* worthy! Worthy,—supremely worthy is the Lamb that was slain! Let us then always say, with the humble men of old, *Our goods are nothing unto thee*, our good works cannot possibly benefit thee. *What have we, great God, that we have not received from thy gracious hand?* And shall we keep back part of thy incontestable property, and impiously wear the robes of praise! Far be the spiritual sacrilege from every pious breast! As *thine* is all the kingdom and power; so *thine* be all the glory for ever and ever!

[If therefore, my brethren, we have the honour of *filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church*;—if we are even offered upon the sacrifice of each other's *faith*; let us dread as blasphemy the wild thought of completing, and perfecting our Lord's infinitely complete and perfect atonement. As God, who is infinite in himself, was not made greater by the immense bulk of created worlds; nor brighter by the shining perfections of countless myriads of angels and suns: so the infinite value of that *one offering, by which Christ has for ever perfected in atoning merits them that are sanctified*, is not augmented by

(19) * I need not inform my judicious readers, that I use the uncouth, barbarian expression of Dr. Owen, "rewardable condecency," to convey the meaning of our Lord, when he graciously speaks of *our meriting or being worthy*. If sick persons will not take a draught but out of a certain cup, made in the height of a queer fashion, we must please them for their good.

the works of all the saints, and the blood of all the martyrs. And as the heat of the fire adds nothing to the nature of the fire, or the beams of the sun to the sun; so the righteousness of the saints does not increase that of Christ, nor adds their holiness any thing to his personal excellence.]

[Keep we then at an awful distance from the gulf, which self-righteous Pharisees set between themselves and the Justifier of those, who, like the contrite publican, are sensible of their ungodliness. With indignation rise we against the delusions of the Romanists, who countenance the absurd and impious doctrine of *indulgences*, by the worse than Pharisaic doctrine of their *works of supererogation*. Let us not only receive, and defend in a scriptural manner, the important Articles of our Church, which I have already mentioned: but with undaunted courage before men, and with penitential contrition before God, let us stand to our XIVth article, which teaches us, after our Lord, to say before the throne of inflexible justice, refulgent holiness, and dazzling glory, *We are unprofitable servants, even when we have done all that is commanded us*. In point of *strict equivalence*, our best works of faith, our holiest duties, cannot *properly* merit the least heavenly reward. But, O! may the humbling truth keep us for ever in the dust! in point of *strict justice* our every bad work *properly* deserves infernal torments.]

[Therefore, while we earnestly contend for practical, pure, undefiled religion, take we the greatest care, not to obscure the *genuine* doctrines of grace. With meekness let us maintain unto blood, the honour of our Saviour's merits, against the hypocritical sons of virtuous pride, who cast the destructive veil of unbelief over the invaluable sacrifice of his body. And in our little sphere, let every one of us testify with the beloved disciple, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, in whom he is well pleased with us*; and for whose sake he works in us to repent, believe, and obey, when we yield to the drawings of his grace, and concur with his Spirit in the work of our salvation.]

[Through that dear Redeemer then, we receive all the favours which the Father of mercies bestows upon us. Are our hearts softened? It is through the influence of his preventing grace. Are our sins blotted out? It is through the sprinkling of his atoning blood. Are our souls renewed? It is by the communications of his powerful righteousness. Are we numbered among God's adopted children, and made partakers of his loving Spirit? It is through ■ faith that receives him as the *light of the world*, and the *life of men*.]

[The very graces, which the Spirit works in us ; and the fruits of holiness, which those graces produce in our hearts and lives, are accepted only for Christ's sake. It is he, who presents them to God, sprinkled with his precious blood, and perfumed with his meritorious intercession. Nor are the defects of our holiest things any other way atoned for, than by the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, which he made upon the cross for the sins of the whole world.]

[For Christ's sake God has annexed certain rewards of grace and glory, to the works of faith which Christ's Spirit excites us to ; and, I repeat it, for the sake of Christ only, we receive the rewards promised to humble, evangelical, sprinkled obedience. All Christian believers say, *Not we, but the grace of God in Christ* : so far as their tempers and actions have been good, they cry out, *Thou hast wrought all our works in us*. They all shout, *Christ for us, and Christ in us, the hope of glory*. They all ascribe salvation to the Lamb ; and while they cast their crowns of righteousness and glory at his feet, they join in the grand chorus of the Church : *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever*. Thus all is Christ ; nothing without, nothing besides him. In a word, he is to believers, as the apostle justly calls him, *ALL IN ALL*.]

[Indeed, in maintaining the doctrine of *free grace*, I cannot but go even farther than our mistaken brethren, who suppose themselves the only advocates for it. They must forgive me, if I cannot be of their sentiment, when they insinuate, that they shall *absolutely and necessarily* be saved. For as reason dictates, that *absolute necessity* vanishes before *free grace* ; so Christ charges his dearest elect to *fear God* as a righteous Judge, who *can cast body and soul into hell* ; yea, who can do it *justly*. No gracious promise therefore is made them whose fulfilment in heaven, as well as upon earth, is not all of *grace* as well as of *truth*, and all through the merits of Christ.]

[O ye precious merits of my Saviour, and thou *free grace* of my God ! I, for one, shall want you as long as the sun or moon endureth. Nay, when those luminaries shall cease to shine ; I shall wrap myself in you ; my transported soul shall grasp you ; my insatiate spirit shall plunge into your unfathomable depths ; and while shall run the never-ending circle of my blessed existence, my overflowing bliss shall spring from you ; my grateful heart shall leap through your impulse, my exulting tongue shall shout your praise, and I shall strike my golden harp to your eternal honour.]

[Nay, this very day, I publicly set my seal again to the important truths contained in the following scriptures:] *There is no other name [no other deserving person] under heaven, given to men, whereby we may [properly] be saved, in whole or in part, but only the name [or person] of JESUS CHRIST. He trod the winepress of God's wrath alone, and of the people there was none with him. He alone is a Saviour, and there is none besides him. [If he that converts a sinner; is said to save a soul from death, it is because he has the honour of being the Saviour's agent, and not because he is the "ORIGINAL CAUSE" of any man's salvation.]*

☞ Wo then to those, who teach sinners the double way, the Pharisaic way, the* [self-righteous] way of salvation, partly by man's [antichristian] merits [according to the first covenant,] and partly by the [proper] merits of Jesus Christ [according to the second.] *If we, or an angel from heaven, says St. Paul, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached, namely, that we are saved [i. e. pardoned, absolved, and sanctified] by grace, through faith [which worketh by love] and that not of ourselves, [not without an atoning Priest and the Spirit helping our infirmities,] it is the gift of God—let him be accursed, Gal. i. 8.]* ☞

☞ He really denies his Saviour, and tears the seamless robe of Christ's righteousness, who patches it with the rags of his own [anti-evangelical faithless] righteousness. [Or, to speak without metaphor, he denies our Lord's meritorious fulfilling of the law of innocence, he despises the Saviour's complete observance of the Adamic law of works, who, being forgetful of his aggravated guilt, and regardless of his palpable impotence, refuses to submit to the law of faith, and to embrace the covenant of grace with an ardour becoming a poor, self-condemned, lost, and undone sinner. Nay, I go farther still:] he takes away [or obstructs] all the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, who pretends to mend it by adding thereto the filthy drops of his own [fancied] goodness, [in order to make a more complete satisfaction to divine justice.] ☞

It is mere blasphemy against divine mercy, says our Church, and great derogation from the blood-shedding of our Saviour, to suppose




(20) * Eleven years ago I said the *Popish way*: I drop the expression now as savouring of Protestant bigotry. Though the Papists lean in general to that extreme, yet many of them have known and taught the way of salvation by a faith that interests us in the Redeemer's merits; many have discovered and attacked self-righteousness in its most deceitful appearances. Many have lived and died in the most profound humility. I would no more be a bitter Protestant, damning all the Papists in a lump; than a bitter Papist, anathematizing all Protestants without exception.

that our works can DESERVE, or PURCHASE to us remission of sins, and consequently salvation. No : it is bestowed on BELIEVERS of the free grace and mercy of God, by the mediation of the blood of his Son Jesus Christ, without merit or deserving on their part, [although their final justification is not without the evangelical worthiness, which their faith derives from that dear Redeemer.] *Hom. on Fasting.*

To conclude : by the covenant of works man has all the glory of his own salvation. Faith [in a Redeemer] is made of no effect ; Christ is entirely set aside, and works are placed in the Mediator's throne.—According to the imaginary, mixed covenant of salvation by our own good works [so called, or to speak with propriety, by our own faithless, hypocritical works,] mended, [as we think,] with [some unscriptural notions and expressions about] Christ's merits ; man has the FIRST share of the glory ; Christ has only man's leavings ; [the Redeemer is allowed to be the *last*, but not the *first* ; the *omega* but not the *alpha* : the two covenants are confounded ;] works and faith [or rather, faithless works and faith, graceless works and grace] contrary to my text, and indeed to common sense, come in together for a part of the honour [as if they were the primary meritorious cause of our salvation ; whereas the good works of faith themselves are at best only the secondary, evidencing cause of our *final* salvation.*]

(21) * Should a prejudiced Reader charge me with having mixed the two covenants in my Checks in opposition to the doctrine of this discourse : should he say, that I have taught the double way of works and faith, i. e. of *faithless works* and *faith*, I protest against the groundless assertion, and appeal to all my candid Readers, whether I have not constantly pointed out the one Gospel way to heaven, the good old way of FAITH which WORKETH by love. An unfeigned faith in Christ, according to the light of our dispensation, a faith shown by evangelical works, is the scriptural condition of the covenant of grace, which I have all along insisted upon : whereas antievangelical works, helped out by a feigned faith, are the imaginary condition of the mixed, fantastic covenant, against which I so justly bore my testimony eleven years ago, and against which I bear it now, fully designing so to do, "God being my helper, till my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

As some persons, through the force of prejudice, and others through some natural defect in their understanding, cannot see any difference between *the way of faith working by obedient love*, which I point out in the Checks ; and *the way of works helped out by feigned faith*, which I decry in this discourse ; I shall, by a plain illustration, endeavour to show them the amazing difference. A good king pities two condemned malefactors just turned off ; and, at the prince's request, not only gets them cut down from the gallows, but after restoring them by proper assistance to a degree of strength, he sets them up in a genteel business, which they are to carry on under the constant direction of the prince. One of them, who is a *publican*, deeply conscious of his crimes, and wondering at the prince's condescension, does with docility and diligence whatsoever he is commanded, frequently complaining that he does so little, and expressing the greatest thankfulness, not only for his life, but for the health, light, tools, and skill he works with. The other, who is a *Pharisee*, forgets that he has been reprieved from the gallows. He is full of self-importance and ingratitude : he wonders at the publican for making so much ado about the king's

But by the Gospel all is set in a most beautiful order and exquisite harmony. The merits and sufferings of Christ, the Redeemer of the world, are the only *meritorious*. [or as says our Church, "*original*" *cause*" of our salvation. The glory is entirely ascribed to him; and he alone sits upon the throne as a Saviour; while proud man has his mouth stopped, or opens it only in the dust to extol redeeming love. Faith, whose office it is continually to borrow the merits of Christ, and to receive the quickening power of his Spirit:  faith, I say, is the only instrumental cause of our free salvation [in the day of conversion.] It receives Christ and salvation, as the hand of a beggar receives an alms.  And as for good works [properly so called,] so far are they from being left out of the Gospel plan, that they have a MOST EMINENT place in it:  they are the DECLARATIVE CAUSE* of our free justification, [both in the day of trial and in the day of judgment:] a constant uniform course of all sorts of good works, with a holy and heavenly-minded conversation, being the only evidence of a lively and saving faith, [when it has time to show itself by external works.]

Thus, [to sum up all in one sentence,] Christ alone [properly] *merits*, faith alone [properly] *apprehends*, and good works alone [properly] *evidence* salvation: yea, they are the fruit of salvation [be-

mercy, and the prince's favour. He pertly tells you that he does his duty; and that, if he has been guilty of some faults, he thanks God, they were not of a capital nature. He perpetually boasts of his diligence, and though he does nothing, or only spoils his work, by doing it entirely against the prince's directions, he says, that he is determined to maintain himself by his own industry; and that, if he do not find it possible to get his living without help, he will condescend to accept some assistance from the prince to make both ends meet; but it shall be as little as he can help, for he does not love to be under an obligation to any body, no not to the king himself.—Now, who does not see, that, while the king graciously rewards the humble diligence of the *penitent publican*, he may justly punish the *proud Pharisee* for his wretched, hypocritical obedience? and that, when Mr. Wesley and I have sometimes contended for the works of the publican, and sometimes decried those of the Pharisee, we have only done the work of evangelists, and declared with the prophets and apostles of old, that *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*: and that *he will give grace and glory, and no good thing shall he withhold from them that live in a godly life*? If this be an error, I ask, wherein does it differ from that frequent and awful declaration of our Lord, *Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted*.

(22) * The word *Cause*, left out by my opponent in his quotation of this part of my old sermon, evidently shows, that even formerly I did not so far lean to Antinomianism, as not to assert the *absolute* necessity of good works, in order to the eternal salvation of adults. For, if works are the secondary *cause* of our final justification, they can no more be dispensed with in the great day, than *faith* in the day of conversion, an *effect* necessarily supposing its *cause*. If therefore I call the justification of adults *free*, it is not to exclude *faith* and *works*, its instrumental causes, in the day of conversion and judgment: but to intimate, that all along we are *primarily* justified by Christ's merits, and that we *never* have one single grain of *original* worthiness.

gun ;]—for [all works meet for repentance spring from the free justification and initial salvation, in which we are put in our infancy ; and] *the love of God shed abroad in a believer's heart, by the Holy Ghost given unto him, is salvation itself ; this love being the tree on which all [the external] good works [of real Christians] grow, and making our gracious heaven below, as it will make our glorious heaven above.*

PART THIRD.

[SINCE I give good works, as I have just observed, a *most eminent place* in the Gospel plan, even the place of the *evidences* that will, under Christ. CAUSE our *eternal* salvation, I may well] proceed to show the injustice or unreasonableness of those who accuse me of preaching against good works. For, "*He exclaims against good works—he runs down good works,*" is an objection [which is still at times] urged against my ministry.

[Although I confess with sorrow, that some years ago, when I had more zeal than prudence, I dropped among you some unguarded expressions, and did not always clearly distinguish between the "good works," so called, of unhumiliated Pharisees ; and the genuine obedience of penitent believers ; yet I should wrong the truth, and undervalue my character as your minister, if I did not observe, that, as professed Antinomians have always loathed the doctrine of a *believer's* justification *by works* ; so the Pharisaical world has always abhorred the doctrine of a *sinner's* justification *by faith*. Hence it is that] the above-mentioned aspersion, with abundance of cruel mockings, and pitiful false reports, have been in all ages the lot of all those who have [steadily] preached the Gospel of Christ, that is, the glad news of free salvation through [obedient] faith in his blood.

We preach Christ crucified, says St. Paul, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness ; but to them that believe, Christ the power and wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i. 23. It is plain from this, and several other passages in the epistles, that the primitive Christians suffered much reproach on this account. St. Peter exhorts them thus : *Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may glorify God by your good works, which they shall behold ; for it is his will, that with well doing ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and make them ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. 1 Peter ii. 12, 15. and iii. 16.*

St. Paul had the same objection continually cast in his face.* *Do*

(23) * The Antinomians *by fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* Because St. Paul fully answers this objection, they make the injudicious believe, that he was of their

we then make void the law through faith? says he in his own defence, Rom. iii. 31. That is, by preaching salvation *through faith*, do we hinder people from doing the good works commanded in the law? *God forbid! yea, we establish the law:* i. e. our preaching is so far from superseding good works, that it [enforces them by the greatest variety of motives, and] puts our hearers into [the *best*, not to say] the *only* method of doing them: for it shows them how, being *sprinkled from an evil conscience*, and having their *heart purified by faith*, they shall naturally [i. e. spontaneously] produce all sorts of good works, instead of bringing forth a few counterfeit ones.

The apostle answers the same objection, Rom. vi. 1. *Shall we then, who are saved by grace through faith, continue in sin that grace may abound? Shall we omit doing good works? shall we do evil works, because salvation is not [by the covenant] of works, [but by that] of grace? God forbid! How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein!* As if he had said, Is not the faith which we preach, a *faith of the operation of God*? Is it not a powerful and active principle, that turns* the heart from all sin to all righteousness? Is it not a faith, by which we are made new creatures, and *overcome the world*? 1 John v. 1, 4.

[When people *lie in darkness*, doing the works of darkness, which in the dark pass either for good works that divine justice will reward, or for trifling offences that divine mercy will overlook; then heartfelt repentance is totally neglected, and deep mourning for sin passes for *despair*. Few know what it is to *look on him whom they have pierced and mourn*. Very few, if any, can experimentally say, *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*]

sentiment; though, upon their plan of doctrine, the objection which he starts is absolutely unanswerable. They say, "*We establish the law* by preaching Christ, who has kept it for us: and by extolling his imputed righteousness, through which we are for ever complete in justifying obedience before God." Now, although we humbly and thankfully acknowledge with them, that our Lord has kept the Adamic law of innocence, and made it honourable for us: yet we absolutely deny, that he has kept the evangelical *law of liberty* for us. Personal obedience to it is indispensably required of every man, and if a believer do not fulfil it for himself, St. Paul and St. James inform us, that a *severer punishment*, and a more *merciless judgment* await his disobedience, than if he had never believed, Heb. x. 29. James ii. 13. Thus those holy apostles fully make up the gap of Antinomian free grace, which some of our Gospel ministers make it their business to widen.

(24) * How could I have had the assurance of asking these questions, if I had believed, as my late opponent, that a man who actually commits the greatest crimes, may actually have as true, justifying faith as Abraham ever had! I should expect, that, if such a faith did not, as I said eleven years ago, *turn the heart from all sin to all righteousness*, it would at least turn it from deliberate adultery, murder, and incest.

[Suppose the lot of a minister, acquainted with the privileges of the Christian dispensation, is cast in a place, where these Pharisaic and common delusions generally prevail; the first thing he has to do, is undoubtedly to uncover and shake the false foundations, on which his unawakened hearers build their hope. He must show them, that their partial, external, faithless obedience will never profit them. He must decry their imaginary good works, tear off their filthy rags of fancied righteousness, sweep away their *refuges of lies*, and scourge their consciences with the curse of the law, till they see their nakedness, feel their guilt, and *receive the sentence of death in themselves*. Then, and not till then, will they stand on a level with the poor contrite publican, and

Groan the sinner's only plea,
 "God be merciful to me!"

[When a preacher is engaged in that important and thankful business, how natural is it for him, especially if he be yet young and unexperienced, or if he be heated by the opposition of obstinate Pharisees, and bigoted Papists, to drop some unguarded expressions against good works; or at least not to make always a proper distinction between the Pharisaical works of unbelief, which Isaiah calls *filthy rags*, and the works of faith which our Lord calls *good and ornamental works*? And how glad are his adversaries, to have such a plausible pretence for throwing an odium upon him, by affirming that he explodes *all* sorts of works, even those for which our *reward will be great in heaven*!]

☞ The devil fought against our Reformers with such weapons. All the books that the Papists wrote against them, rang with the charge of their turning good works out of Christianity. ☞ Hear good Bishop Latimer, one of the best livers that ever were: *You will say now, "Here is all faith, faith; but we hear nothing of good works:" for some carnal people make such carnal objections like themselves, &c.* Sermon on Twelfth Day.

Of the same import is the following passage out of the Homily on Fasting: *Thus much is said of good works, &c. to take away so much as may be, from envious minds, and slanderous tongues, all just occasion of slanderous speaking, as though good works were rejected.*

Thus St. Peter, St. Paul, and our Reformers were accused of despising good works, because they exalted Christ, [and with a holy indignation trampled upon the works of unbelief, which are the foundation of all Pharisaic hopes:] And [so far as I have not, by

unguarded expressions, given a *just* cause of offence to those, who are glad of any occasion to decry the fundamental doctrine of salvation by faith ;] I own that I rejoice to be counted worthy of suffering the same reproach, with such a cloud of faithful witnesses. Nevertheless, as the Scriptures say, that we must *not let the good that is in us be evil spoken of*, I shall advance some arguments, which, by God's blessing, will either convince or shame my accusers.

You say, [and this I speak particularly to you, that are fully set against the doctrine of *salvation by faith* :] you say, "that I preach against good works—that I run down good works, &c.:" but pray, do you know what good works are? I am afraid you do not, or else you would* [not accuse me so rashly :] give me leave therefore to instruct you once in this point.

All divines agree, that good works are of three sorts:—1. Works of *piety* towards God ; 2. Works of *charity* towards our neighbour ; and 3. Works of *self-denial* towards ourselves.

[To say nothing now of the good works of the *heart*, such as good thoughts, good tempers, and internal acts of repentance, faith, hope, and love ;] in the first class [of *external* good works,] which includes *works of piety*, divines rank public prayer in the church, family prayer in private houses, and [meditation and] private prayer in one's closet : singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs : reading the Bible and other good books : hearing the word preached or expounded : receiving the sacraments : keeping the Sabbath-day and festivals holy : confessing Christ before a wicked world : and suffering the loss of one's estate, of one's good name, or life itself, for the Gospel's sake.

Now I appeal to every impartial hearer, yea, and to thy own conscience, O man, who accusest me of preaching against good works, whether I ever taught, directly or indirectly, that we ought not constantly to attend public worship in the house of God, as well as private worship in our own houses, and to perform secret worship in our closets:—Whether I ever spoke against singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs ; or against reading the Bible and other good books:—Whether I ever so much as hinted, that we ought not to endeavour so to despatch our worldly business, as to hear [if possible] the word preached or expounded both on Sundays and working days.

(25) * Instead of these words [not accuse me so rashly] I formerly wrote [be ashamed to accuse me so falsely.] I reject them now, because a minister of the Gospel should not only speak the truth, but endeavour to speak it in the most acceptable manner. It is enough to give offence when it cannot be avoided. We should not provoke the displeasure of our hearers *without necessity*.

—Whether I ever *intimated*,* that we can live in the neglect of God's ordinances, and break his Sabbaths, without bringing upon ourselves SWIFT DESTRUCTION :—And lastly, whether at any time I cried down suffering reproach for Christ, and parting with all things, even life itself, to follow him and his doctrine.

Nay, do not you know in your own breasts, that my insisting upon these *good works*, and encouraging all I can to do them, is what makes me to be despised and rejected by many, and perhaps by yourself? How can you then, without wounding† [your own conscience] accuse me of preaching against good works? Are you not rather the person that speaks against them? Are you not *yourself* one of those [loose moralists] who say, that, “ For their part they see no need of so many “ sermons, lectures, and sacraments in the Church ; no need of so “ much singing, reading, praying, and godly conversation, in private “ houses : no need of such strictness in keeping the Sabbath-day “ holy, &c. ? ”

If you are one of them, you add [I fear] detraction to infidelity, and bearing false testimony to open profaneness [or Loadicean lukewarmness.] You decry *good works* yourself by your words, your practice, and your example ; and when you have done, you lay the sin at my door ; you say that I preach against them ! O how will you reconcile this conduct, I shall not say to Christianity, but to good manners, good sense, or even to heathen honesty !

In the *second* class of good works, divines place works of [justice and] charity ; and these are of two sorts, such as are done to the *bodies*, and such as are done to the *souls* of men. The former are, [for the most part] enumerated by our Lord, Matt. xxv. They consist in being true and just in all our dealings ; in *providing things honest in the sight of all men*, for us and ours ; in paying our just debts as soon as possible, in protecting widows and fatherless children, in giving food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty ; in entertaining strangers, easing the oppressed, clothing the naked, attending the sick, visiting the prisoners, [and burying the dead, from scriptural and not Pharisaical motives.]

(26) * My opponent has not only done this, but he has *intimated* that all believers may commit adultery, murder, and incest, not only *without bringing upon themselves swift destruction*, but with this additional advantage, that they shall infallibly “ sing louder ” in heaven for their deepest falls, which can never finally hurt them, because all their sins are unconditionally for ever and for ever forgiven. Had I ever insinuated such loose principles among my parishioners, I should have had a brazen forehead indeed, to look them in the face, while I made the above-mentioned appeal.

(27) † Eleven years ago I said [*common sense and common honesty*.] I now discard the expression as needlessly offensive.

Now will any one, who scruples advancing an untruth, dare affirm, that I ever spoke a word against doing any one of these good works?—Against doing them *at improper times, from bad motives, in a wrong manner, and to wrong ends*, I have often spoken; and so have all the preachers, who do not *daub the wall with untempered mortar*: Christ first, Matt. vi. 2. St. Paul next, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3. and our Church after them; see the Homily on Fasting. But I ask it again, who ever heard me speak one word *against doing them*? On the contrary, have I not declared again and again, that even a *cup of cold water, given in Christ's name, should in nowise lose its reward*—should certainly be rewarded in eternal life. [And do not some of you know, that within these two years, I have lost many of my religious friends, by making a stand for the evangelical *worthiness* of the works of faith?]

As for works of mercy done to the *souls* of men, such as [giving a Christian education to our children and apprentices, comforting the afflicted, encouraging the dejected, strengthening the weak, exhorting the careless, succouring the tempted, instructing the ignorant, [sympathizing with mourners] warning the stubborn, [detecting hypocrisy] reproving sin, stopping immorality, rebuking profaneness, and helping each other in the narrow way; it is known to many, that my name is cast out as evil by many Sabbath-breakers, swearers, and drunkards, for endeavouring to walk in these good works myself, and to induce others to walk in them.

And yet *you*, [I still address myself to the inveterate enemies of salvation by faith] *you*, who possibly ridicule all those good works, and dream of being saved without them; *you*, who do perhaps just the reverse of them, strengthening one another's hands in licentiousness, and profaneness; in Sabbath-breaking, swearing, or scoffing at every thing that looks like seriousness; *you* accuse me of despising or discountenancing good works! O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askalon, lest the very Philistines laugh at the glaring inconsistency of your words and conduct.

Good works of the *third* class, relate to keeping under the flesh, and all its sinful appetites. The chief of these works, are a moderate use of meat, drink, and sleep; self-denial, [in apparel, furniture, and equipage;] chastity [in all its branches; subduing our slothful, rebellious flesh by] early rising, abstinence, fasting: [and in a word, by *taking up our daily cross, and following our abstemious, and yet glorious Lord*.

[Permit me to do as St. Paul—to *speak as it were foolishly in his confidence of boasting*.] Have I not enforced the necessity of these

good works both *publicly, and from house to house*? Have you not sometimes even gone away from this place of worship, secretly displeased at my insisting so much upon them; complaining perhaps, “that I went too far, or that nobody could live up to what I preach;” and making a hundred such remarks, instead of meditating upon these words of our Lord: *With man indeed, it is impossible, but with God all things are possible*? And yet you now complain that I do not preach up good works.—Pray, my brethren, be consistent: keep to one point, and do not say and unsay: I can no more be too strict, and yet make too little of good works; than I can go east and west at the same time. Only think . . . and you will perceive that your complaints justify me, that your sayings overturn one another, and that *your own mouths prove you perverse*.

You will probably say, “Have we not heard you affirm more than once, that nobody can be saved by his works: yea, that a man may go as constantly to church, as the * Pharisee did to the temple, be as virtuous as he was, pay tithes exactly as he did, and be *damned* after all? Can you deny having preached this doctrine twenty times?

Deny it!—by no means. It is a doctrine for which, God being my helper, I am ready to go to the stake. It is the very doctrine that I have established in the former part of this discourse: how then can I deny it?

Here methinks a Pharisee replies in triumph: “Well then, you plead guilty to the charge: you confess that you have preached twenty times against good works.”

I deny the conclusion. Have you not understanding enough to see, there is a vast difference between preaching† against the [proper] *merit* of good works, and preaching against good works themselves? between saying, that obedience to the king will never get us the crown of Great Britain, and affirming that we owe the king no obedience? In a word, between saying that good works will never procure us heaven, [as the *primary*, and, strictly speaking, *meritorious* cause of our salvation] and declaring that we ought not to do good works? Surely your rational faculties are not so impaired, but you may perceive those propositions are by no means of the same import.

If I say, that eating will never make me immortal, that drinking will never turn me into an angel, and that doing my work will never

(30) * From this objection it is evident, that the works which I decried eleven years ago, were those against which I now bear my testimony, namely *Pharisaical* works.

(31) † It appears to me, that my sermon, far from being “the best confutation of the Minutes,” is consonant to that proposition which has given such offence: *Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition*

take me to the third heaven; do I so much as hint that eating is useless, drinking of no service, and doing my business unprofitable? O how does prejudice blind even men of sense and religion! How hardly does truth go down with us, when we do not love it! How gladly do we dress it up in a fool's coat, that we may have some pretence to despise and reject it!

If you would speak according to *strict* truth, my brethren, you would not say that I “preach against good works, that I run down good works, &c.” which is a mistake, as I showed just now: but you would say, that I preach against the *[proper]* merit of good works in point of salvation: this is very true, so I do, and so I am determined to do by God's grace as long as I live. So did Christ and his apostles; so do our Articles and Homilies; and so the children of God have done in all ages. ☞ Those of the Old Testament * [far from mentioning any *proper* merit of their own, cried out: *Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes,*—Job xlii. 5. —*Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am by nature, and have been by practice, a man of unclean lips,* Isa. vi. 5. Those of the New, prayed to be found in Christ, not having their own [Pharisaic] righteousness which is of the law of works, but the [evangelical] righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ. Phil. iii. 9. And those of our Church profess that they are not worthy to gather the crumbs under the Lord's table, and that they do not come to it, trusting in their own righteousness, or good works, but in God's manifold and great mercies through Jesus Christ: so far are they from thinking that they [properly] merit salvation [either in whole or in part.] See *Com. Service*.

☞ Yea, I declare it as upon the housetop, of all the false doctrines that ever came out of the pit of hell, none has done such execution for Satan in the church of God [as the Pharisaic conceit that we have, or may have any *proper, original* merit.] Stealing, drunkenness, and adultery, have slain their thousands; but this damnable error, which is the very root of unbelief, its *ten thousands*. ☞ It blinded the Pharisees, and hardened the Jews against Christ.† It plunges

(32) * Instead of this addition, eleven years ago, I said, *owned that all their righteousness were as filthy rags,* Isa. lxiv. 6. ☞ For leaning then too much towards Calvinism, I supposed that the prophet in this passage spoke of the *righteousness of faith*: but since I have dared to read my Bible without prejudice, and to consult the context, I have found that text is spoken *only* of the *hypocritical* righteousness of the wicked; and in the Fourth Check, Vol. i. p. 333. I have tried to rescue it from the hands of the Antinomians who had taught me to wrest it from its *proper* meaning.

† Here I leave out those words; “*It [the Pharisaic conceit of merit] damned the foolish virgins, and the man who had not on a wedding garment.*” And I do it, because upon second thoughts, it appears to me, that the boldness of the foolish virgins, and the insolence

into everlasting fire all nominal Christians, *who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.*

Yea, strange as the assertion may seem to some, this [pernicious error] feeds immorality, and secretly nourishes all manner of vice.

The Scripture tells us, 1 Cor. vi. 9. that *neither fornicators nor effeminate, neither thieves nor covetous, neither drunkards nor revilers, neither unrighteous nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* Now how comes it to pass, that so many, who are guilty of one or another of those abominations, remain as easy as if they were guiltless? Why, this damnable notion, that the merit of their works will atone for the guilt of their sins, makes them think that they shall do well enough in the end. “I get drunk now and then,” says one, “but I am honest.”—“I oppress or cheat my neighbour,” says another, “but I go to Church and Sacrament.”—“I love money or diversions above all things,” says a third, “but I bless God, I am neither a thief nor a drunkard.”—“I am passionate and swear sometimes,” says a fourth, “but my heart is good, and I never keep malice in my breast; besides, I’ll repent and mend sometime or other before I die.” Now the sum of all those pleas amounts to this: “I do the devil’s works, but I do good works too. I am guilty of one piece of wickedness, but not of all: and I hope, that through the merit of the good which I do, and of the evil which I have left undone hitherto, or purpose to leave undone by and by, Christ will have mercy upon me.”

☞ Thus all our [Pharisaic*] delays of conversion, and all our [self-righteous] remorseless going on in sin and wickedness, are founded upon the doctrine of [Pharisaic] merits. Well then may our church call it “*a devilish doctrine, which is mere blasphemy against God’s mercy:*” a doctrine which turns Christ out of his throne [by refusing him the honour of being the primary and properly meritorious cause of our salvation:] a doctrine which [by crooked ways] leads first to [worldly-mindedness or] licentiousness, as the conduct of many, who cry up the [self-righteous] merit of good works [so called] too plainly shows; and next to Pharisaic morality and formality: and from both, except [a timely submission to] converting

of the man, who pressed to the marriage-feast without proper dress, exactly represent the vain confidence, with which *immoral* Solidians cry, *Lord! Lord!* and make a shining profession in the robe of self-imputed righteousness; despising the evangelical robes of real righteousness and true holiness, and calling them *cobwebs* spun by spiders out of their own bowels.

* I add the words *Pharisaic* and *self-righteous*, to come at Mr. *Fulsome* and his numerous fraternity, whom I now should be glad to convince of their *remorseless* going on in sin, and of their *Antinomian* delays of conversion.

grace prevent it, into endless misery : for, *No doubt*, says Bishop Latimer, in his sermon on twelfth-day, *he that departeth out of this world in that opinion* [or, as he expresses it in the same paragraph, those who “*think to be saved by the law*,” by the first covenant] “*shall never come to heaven* :— [for they set their hearts against Christ ; and, like the Pharisees of old, not only mistake the works of unbelief for good works ; but give them also the place of the *primary, meritorious cause* of eternal salvation ; when, if they were the works of faith, they would only be a *secondary evidencing cause* of it. Now as such men cannot possibly do this, without the greatest degree of spiritual pride, impenitency, and unbelief ; it is plain, that, if they die confirmed in this grand antichristian error, they cannot be saved : for St. Paul informs us that pride is *the condemnation of the devil* ; and our Lord declares, that *except we repent we shall all perish*, and that *he who believeth not shall be damned*.

FOURTH PART.

[HAVING thus laid before you the destructive nature of self-righteousness,] it is time to come to the last thing proposed. which was to show, why good works cannot [properly speaking] deserve salvation in whole or in part ; and to answer the old cavil, “ If good works cannot save us,* why should we trouble ourselves about them ? [In doing the former, I shall attempt to give *Pharisaism* a finishing stroke : and in doing the latter, I shall endeavour to guard the scriptural doctrine of grace against *Antinomianism*, which prevails almost as much among professed believers as *Pharisaism* does among professed moralists.]

And first, that good works cannot [strictly speaking] merit salvation in part, much less altogether, I prove by the following arguments.

1. We must be wholly saved by the covenant of *works*, or by the covenant of *grace* ; my text showing most clearly, that a third covenant, made up of [Christless] merits [according to the first.] and divine mercy, [according to the second,] is as imaginary a thing in

(33) * This is strictly true ; nevertheless we must grant, that as cold water, when it is put over the fire in a proper vessel, imbibes fiery heat, and boils without damping the fire : so our works of faith, when they are laid with proper humility on the golden altar of Christ's merits, are so impregnated with his diffusive worth, as to acquire “ *a rewardable condecency unto eternal life*.” And this they do without mixing in the least with the *primary, or properly meritorious cause* of our salvation ; and consequently without obscuring the Redeemer's glory.

divinity, as a fifth element made up of fire and water would be in natural philosophy.*

2. There is less proportion between heavenly glory and our works, than between the sun and a mote that flies in the air : therefore to pretend, that they will avail towards [purchasing, or properly meriting] heaven, (see the 5th note) argues want of common sense, as well as want of humility.

3. God has wisely determined to save *proud* man in a way that excludes boasting. *God is just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus.* Where is boasting then ? says the apostle ; *It is excluded*, answers he : *By what covenant*, does he ask ? Is boasting excluded by the covenant of works ? No, *but by the law of faith*, by the covenant of grace, whose condition is [penitential, self-abasing, obedient] faith in Jesus Christ. *Therefore we conclude*, says he, *that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law*, Rom. iii. 27, 28. If our good works [properly speaking] deserve the least part of our salvation, we may justly boast that *our own arm* has got us *that part* of the victory ; and we have reason to glory in ourselves, contrary to the Scriptures, which say, that *every mouth must be stopped*, that *boasting is excluded*, and that *he who glories must glory in the Lord*.

[If St. Paul *glories* in his sufferings and labours, it is not then without Christ before God, but with Christ before the Corinthians, and under peculiar circumstances. He never imagined that his works were meritorious according to the *first* covenant ; much less did he fancy that they had one single grain of *proper* merit. He perfectly knew, that if they were rewardable, it was not from any self-excellence, which he had put into them ; but merely from God's gratuitous promise in the second covenant ; from Christ's grace, by which they were wrought ; from his atoning blood, in which they were washed ; and from his *proper* merits, with which they were perfumed.]

[To suppose that Adam himself, if he had continued upright, would have gloried in his righteousness as a Pharisee, is to suppose him deeply fallen. In paradise God was *all in all* ; and as he is also *all in all* in heaven, we may easily conceive, that, with respect to *self-exaltation*, the mouth of Gabriel is not less shut before the throne, than that of Mary Magdalen. Therefore, if any out of hell Pharisaically glory in themselves, it is only those self-righteous sons of Lucifer and pride, to whom our Lord says still, *You are of your father the devil, whose works ye do, when ye seek to kill me, and glory in yourselves.*]

* That the *works* of faith save us by the covenant of grace [next to *Christ and Faith*] will be proved in the *Scriptural Essay*.

4. Our evil works far overbalance our good works, both in quantity and quality : let us first then pay a righteous God the debt, [the immense debt of ten thousand talents that] we owe him by dying the second death, which is the wages of our *bad* works ; and *then* we may talk of *buying* heaven with our *good* works.

5. Our *best* works have such a mixture of imperfection, that they must be atoned for, and made acceptable by Christ's blood ; so far are they from atoning for the least sin,* [and *properly* meriting our acceptance] before God [even according to the second covenant.]

6. If ever we did one truly good work, the merit† is not ours, but God's, who by his free grace " prevented, accompanied, and followed us" in the performance. For it is *God*, who of his good pleasure *worketh in us both to will and to do*. Phil. ii. 12. *Not I*, says the apostle, after mentioning his good works, *but the grace of God in me*, 1 Cor. xv. 10. compared with James i. 17.

7. We perpetually say at church : *Glory be to the Father*, as Creator ; *and to the Son*, as Redeemer ; *and to the Holy Ghost*, as Sanctifier. Christ is then to have all the glory of our *redemption* : but if our good works come in for any share in the *purchase* of heaven, we must come in also for some share of the glory of our [redemption.‡] Thus Christ will no longer be the only Redeemer : we shall be co-redeemers with him, and consequently we shall have a share in the doxology ; which is a blasphemous supposition.

8. Our Lord himself decides the question in those remarkable words, *When you have done all that is commanded you* ; and where is the man that [according to the law of innocence§] has done,

(34) * Eleven years ago I said [*and making us accepted* ;] I now reject the expression as unguarded ; for it clashes with this proposition of St. Peter : *In every nation he that WORKETH righteousness is ACCEPTED of him*. We should take care so to secure the foundation, as not to throw down the building.

(35) † This is the very doctrine of evangelical rewardableness, or improper, *derived* merit, so honourable to Christ, so humbling to man, which I have maintained in the *Vindication*, Vol. ii. p. 61, &c. Therefore, if I am a merit-monger and a heretic now, it is evident that I was so eleven years ago, when I wrote a sermon, which, as my late opponent is pleased to say, [Fin. Stroke, p. 44.] "*does me much credit, and plainly shows, that I was once zealously attached to the doctrines of the Church of England.*"

(36) ‡ I substitute the word *redemption* for the word *salvation*, that I formerly used ; because English logic demands it. By the same reason I leave out in the end of the paragraph the words "*Saviour*," and "*joint-saviours*," which I had illogically coupled with "*Redeemer*," and *co-redeemers*." For although it is strictly true that no man can *redeem* his brother's soul, or even *ransom* his body from the power of the grave ; yet, according to the doctrine of *secondary, instrumental causes*, it is absolutely false that no man can *save* his neighbour ; for *In doing this*, says St. Paul, *thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee*. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

(37) § I say [the law of *innocence*] to defend the works of the law of FAITH, by the instrumentality of which we shall be justified or saved in the great day. For these works,

I shall not say *all*, but the one half of it? say, *We are unprofitable servants.* Now it is plain, that *unprofitable servants* do not [properly] merit in whole or in part, to sit down at their master's table, and be admitted as children to a share of his estate. Therefore, if God gives heaven to believers, it is entirely owing to his free mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and not at all through the [proper] merits of our own works.

9. I shall close these observations by St. Paul's unanswerable argument. *If righteousness come by the law, If salvation come by [the covenant of works,] then Christ died in vain*, Gal. ii. 21. Whence it follows that if it come *in part* by the works of the law, part of Christ's sufferings were vain, a supposition which ends in the same blasphemy against the Mediator.

[10. That man might deserve any thing of God, upon the footing of *proper* worthiness, or merit of equivalence, God should stand in need of something, which it is in man's power to bestow : but this is absolutely impossible : for God, being *self-sufficient*, in his infinite fullness, is far above any want : and man being a dependent creature, every moment supported by his Maker and Preserver, has nothing to which God has not a far greater right than man himself. This is what the apostle asserts where he says, *Who has given him FIRST, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?* But much more in this remarkable passage : *Who maketh thee to differ from another?* If thou sayest, The number of my talents and the proper use I have made of them : I ask again, Who gave thee those talents? And who super-added grace, wisdom, and an opportunity to improve them?—Here we must all give glory to God, and say with St. James, *Every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.*]

[Upon this consideration, the apostle proceeds to check the Christian Pharisee thus : *What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?*—Whence it follows, that though St. Paul himself *glories* in, and *boasts* of his disinterestedness, yea, solemnly declares, *No man shall stop me of this boasting*, yet he did not glory in that virtue *as if he had not received it* : no, he gave the *original* glory of it to *Him of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things*. The glory of bestowing original gifts upon us belongs then to God alone ; and the *original* glory of the humility with which we receive, and of the faithfulness with which we use those gifts, belongs also to him alone : although,

flowing from Christ's grace, and never aspiring at any higher place than that which is allotted them, viz. the place of *justifying evidences*, they can never detract from the Saviour's honour or his grace.

in the very nature of things, we have such a *derived* share of that glory, as gives room to the *reasonableness* of divine *rewards*. For why should one be rewarded more than another; yea, why should one be rewarded rather than punished, if *derived* faithfulness does not make him more *rewardable*?

[Observe however, that, although by this *derived* faithfulness, one man makes himself to differ enough from another, for God to reward him reasonably rather than another; yet no man can say to his Maker, without Satanic arrogance, "I have made myself to differ from such an one, therefore I make a lawful demand upon thy justice: thus much have I done for thee; do as much for me again." For while God dispenses *punishments* according to the rules of *strict* justice; he bestows his *rewards* only according to the rules of moral aptitude and *distributive* equity, in consequence of Christ's *proper* merits, and of his own gracious promise; all men on earth, and all angels in heaven, being far less capable of *properly* deserving at God's hands, than all the mites and ants in England are, of *properly* meriting any thing at the hands of the king.]

[Lastly, what slaves earn is not their own, but the master's to whom they belong; and what your horses get is your property, not theirs: Now as God has a thousand times more right to us, than masters to their slaves, and you to your horses; it follows, that, supposing we were sinless, and could properly earn any thing, our profit would be God's, not ours. So true it is, that, from the creature to the Creator, the idea of *proper* merit is as contrary to *justice* as it is to *decency*]

As the preceding arguments [against the *proper* merit of works] will, I hope, abundantly satisfy all those [modern Pharisees,] who have not entirely cast away the Christian revelation, I pass to the old objection of [some ignorant] Papists [and injudicious Protestants.] "If good works cannot [merit us heaven. (See 5th note,) or properly] save us, why should we trouble ourselves about them?" [And in answering it, I shall guard the doctrine of obedience against the Antinomians.]

As this quibbling argument may puzzle the simple, and make the boasting Pharisees, that use it, triumph as if they had overturned the Protestant doctrine of salvation by faith without [the] works [decried by St. Paul;] I beg leave to show its weakness by a comparison.

Suppose you said to me, "Your doing the work of a parish priest will never [merit] you an archbishopric;" and I answered with discontent, "If doing my office will never [merit] me the see of Canterbury, why should I do it at all? I need not trouble myself about preaching any more;" would you not ask me whether a clergyman

has no reason to attend his flock, but the wild and proud conceit that his labour must [deserve*] him a bishopric. And I ask in my turn ; Do you suppose, that a Christian has no motive to do good works, but the wilder and prouder notion, that his good works must [properly speaking merit] him heaven ? (See 5th note.)

If therefore I can show, that he has the strongest motives, and inducements, to abound in good works without the doctrine of [proper] merits ; I hope you will drop your objection. You say, " If good works will never [*properly* merit us salvation,] why should we do them ?" I answer, For six good reasons, each of which [in some degree†] overturns your objection.

1. ☞ We are to do good works, to show our obedience to our heavenly Father. ☞ As a child obeys his parents, not to *purchase* their estate, but because he is their child, [and does not choose to be disinherited :] so believers obey God, not to get heaven for their wages ; but because he is their Father, [and they would not provoke him to disinherit them.†]



2. ☞ We are to abound in all good works, to be justified before men [now, and before the Judge of all the earth in the great day ;] and to show that our faith is saving. St. James strongly insists upon this, Chap. ii. 18 ☞ *Show me thy faith without thy works*, says he, *and I will show thee my faith by my works* : That is, Thou sayest thou hast faith, [because thou wast once justified by faith ;] but thou doest not the works of a believer : thou canst follow vanity, and conform to this evil world : thou canst swear or break the Sabbath ; lie, cheat, or get drunk ; rail at thy neighbour, or live in uncleanness : in a word, thou canst do one or another of the devil's works. Thy works therefore, give thee the lie, and show that thy faith is [now like] the devil's faith ; for if *faith without works be dead*, how doubly dead



(38) * This illustration is not strictly just. If the king had millions of bishoprics to give, if he had promised to bestow one upon every *diligent* clergyman ; solemnly declaring that all who *neglect* their charge should not only miss the ecclesiastical dignity annexed to diligence, but be put to a shameful death as so many murderers of souls, the cases would then be exactly parallel. Besides, every clergyman is not a candidate for a bishopric, but every man is a candidate for heaven. Again, a clergyman may be as happy in his parsonage as a bishop in his palace : but if a man miss heaven, he sinks into hell. These glaring truths I overlooked when I was a " *LATE evangelical preacher*."

† Formerly I said [*entirely*] but experience has taught me otherwise.

(39) † This argument is weak without the additions. Our Lord informs us, that when the Father in the Gospel says to his fair-spoken child, Son, *Go work to-day in my vineyard*, he answers, *I go, Sir, and goes not*. And God himself says, *I have nourished and brought up CHILDREN, but they have rebelled against me*. Wo to the parents, who have such children, and have no power to cut off an entail !

must faith with *bad works* be !* [And how absurd is it to suppose, that thou canst be *instrumentally* justified by a *dead* faith, or *declaratively* justified by *bad works*, either before men, or in the sight of God !] But *I will show thee my faith by my works*, adds the apostle : i. e. By constantly abstaining from all evil works, and steadily walking in all sorts of good works, I will make thee confess, that I am really in Christ ■ *new creature*, and that my faith is living and genuine.

3. Our Saviour told his disciples, that they were to  do good works, not to purchase heaven, but that others might be stirred up to serve God. You then, that have found the way of salvation by Christ, *let your light so shine before men, that even they, who speak evil of the doctrine of faith, seeing your good works, may† glorify your Father who is in heaven.*  Matt. v. 16.

4.  We are to do good works out of *gratitude* and *love* to our dear Redeemer, who having [conditionally] purchased heaven for us with his precious blood,  asks the small return of our love and obedience. *If you love me, says he, keep my commandments*, John xiv. 15. [This motive is noble, and continues powerful so long as we keep our *first love*. But alas ! it has little force with regard to the myriads that rather *fear* than *love* God : and it has lost its force in all those, who *have denied the faith*, or *made shipwreck of it*, or *cast off their first faith*, and consequently their *first love*, and their *first gratitude*. The multitude of these, in all ages, has been innumerable. I fear, we might say of justified believers, what our Lord did of the cleansed lepers : *Were there not ten cleansed ? but where are the nine ?* Alas ! like the apostates mentioned by St. Paul, they are *turned aside* after the flesh, after the world, *after fables*, after Antinomian dotages, after *vain jangling*, after *Satan himself*, 1 Tim. v. 15.]

5. We are to be careful to maintain good works, [not only that we may not lose our confidence in God, 1 John iii. 19, &c. but also]

(40) * If this single clause in my old sermon stand, so will the Minutes and the Checks. But the whole argument is a mere jest, if a man that wallows in adultery, murder, or incest, may have as true, justifying faith, as David had when he killed Goliath.

(41) † This argument is quite frivolous, if my late opponent is right. *How has many a poor soul, says he, who has been faithless through the fear of man, even blessed God for Peter's denial !* Five Letters, 2d edition revised, p. 40. Hence it appears, that denying Christ with oaths and curses, will cause "*many ■ poor soul to bless God,*" i. e. *to glorify our heavenly Father*. Now if *horrid crimes* do this as well as *good works*, is it not absurd to enforce the practice of *good works*, by saying, that *they alone* have that blessed effect ? But my opponent may easily get over this difficulty before those whose battles he fights. He needs only charge me with *disingenuity* for not quoting the 3d revised edition of his book, if he has published such a one.

that we may nourish and increase our faith or spiritual life ; [or to use the language of St. James, that *faith may work with our works*, and that *by works our faith may be made perfect*.] As a man [in health, who is* threatened by no danger] does not walk that his walking may procure him life, [or save his life from destruction :] but that he may preserve his health, and [add to] his activity : so a believer does not walk in good works to get [an initial life of grace, or a primary title to an] eternal life [of glory :] but to keep up and increase the vigour of his faith, by which he has [already a title to, and the earnest of] eternal life. For as the best health without any exercise is soon destroyed, so the strongest faith without works will soon droop and die. Hence it is that St. Paul exhorts us to *Hold faith, and a good conscience, which some having put away, by refusing to walk in good works, concerning faith have made shipwreck*.]

6. ☞ We are not to do good works to obtain heaven by them, [as if they were the *properly meritorious* cause of our salvation.] This† proud, antichristian motive would poison the best doings of the greatest saints, if *saints* could thus trample on the blood of their Saviour : such a wild conceit being only the Pharisee's cleaner way to hell. But we are to do them, because they shall be *rewarded* in heaven.‡☛ To understand this, we must remember, that, according to the Gospel and our liturgy, God *opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers* : [because *true believers* are always *true workers* ; true faith always working by love to God's commandments. Next to Christ then, to speak the language of some injudicious divines,] *Faith alone*, when it *works by love*, takes us to heaven : [Or rather, to avoid an apparent contradiction, *Faith* and its *works* are the way to heaven :] But as there are stars of different magnitude in the material heaven, so also in the spiritual. Some who, like St. Paul, have eminently shined by *the works of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love*, shall shine like the brightest stars, [or the sun :] and ☞ others, who, like the dying thief and infants, have had

(42) * Formerly I did not consider that as Noah *walked* into the ark, and Lot out of Sodom, to save their lives ; so sinners are called to turn from their iniquity, and do that which is lawful and right to *save their souls alive*. Nor did I observe, that saints are commanded to *walk in good works*, lest the destroyer overtake them, and they become *sons of perdition*. However, in Babel, such capital oversights did me "*much credit*."

(43) † Here I leave out the word *selfish*, as being ambiguous. It is not *selfishness*, but true wisdom and well-ordered self-love, *evangelically* to *labour for the meat that endureth to everlasting life*. Not to do it is the height of Laodicean stupidity, or Antinomian conceit.

(44) ‡ Here I leave out *although not with heaven*, for the reasons assigned in the *Scriptural Essay*.

[little* or] no time to show their faith [or holiness] by their works, shall enjoy a less degree of glorious bliss : but all shall ascribe the whole of their salvation only to the mercy of God, the merits of Christ, and the efficacy of his blood and Spirit, ~~and~~ according to St. John's vision : *I beheld, and lo a great multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, with palms in their hands, clothed with robes, that they had washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb : And* [while our Lord said to them by his gracious looks, according to the doctrine of secondary, instrumental causes, *Walk with me in white, for you are WORTHY, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you, for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, &c.*] they cried [according to the doctrine of primary and properly-meritorious causes] not "Salvation to our endeavours and good works ; but *Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*"

[Thus, by the rules of celestial courtesy, to which our Lord vouchsafes to submit in glory ; while the saints *justly* draw a veil over their works of faith, to extol *only* their Saviour's merits ; He *kindly* passes over his own blood and righteousness, to make mention *only* of their works and obedience. They, setting their seal to the first Gospel axiom, shout with great truth, "*Salvation to God and the Lamb :*" And He, setting his seal to the second Gospel axiom, replies with great condescension, *Salvation to them that are worthy ! Eternal salvation to all that obey me.* Rev. iii. 4. Heb. v. 9.

(Therefore, notwithstanding the perpetual assaults of proud Pharisees, and of self-humbled Antinomians ; the two Gospel axioms stand unshaken upon the two fundamental, inseparable doctrines of faith and works—of *proper* merit in Christ, and *derived* worthiness in his members. Penitent believers freely receive all from the God of grace and mercy, through Christ ; and humble workers freely return all to the God of holiness and glory, through the same adorable

(45) * Here Mr. H. triumphs in his *Finishing Stroke*, p. 50, last note, through my omission of those two words. But without having recourse to "*magical power*," or even to "*Logica Helvetica*," to reconcile my sermon with my Checks ; I desire unprejudiced Calvinists to mention any one besides the dying thief, that ever evidenced his faith by confessing Christ when his very apostles denied or forsook him ; by openly praying to him, when the multitudes reviled him ; by humbly pleading guilty before thousands ; by publicly defending injured innocence ; by boldly reproving blasphemy ; by kindly admonishing his fellow-malefactor ; and, by fully acknowledging Christ's *kingly* office, when he was crowned with thorns, and hanging on the cross ? Did St. John, did Mary Magdalen, did even the Virgin Mary, *show their faith* by such glorious *works*, under such unfavourable circumstances ? O ye Solifidians, where is your attention ?

Mediator. Thus God has *all the honour of freely bestowing* upon us a crown of righteousness, in a way of judicious mercy and distributive justice; while we, *through grace*, have* *all the honour of freely receiving it*, in a way of penitential faith and obedient gratitude. To him therefore, one eternal Jehovah, in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed *all the merit, honour, praise, and dominion, worthy of a God, for ever and ever.*]

(46) * OBJECTION. "We *have all the honour through grace!* (says a friend of voluntary humility) what honour can you possibly ascribe to *man* when you have already ascribed *all honour to God?* But one, who begins his sermon by pleading for *merit*, may well conclude it by taking from God part of his *honour, dominion, and praise.*"—

ANSWER. I plead only for an interest in Christ's *merits* through faith and the works of faith. This interest I call *derived worthiness*, which would be as dishonourable to Christ, as it is honourable to believers. I confess also, that I aspire at the *honour* of shouting in heaven, *Allelujah to God and the Lamb!* In the mean time I hope, that I may pay an inferior *honour* to all men, ascribe *derived dominion* to the king, bestow *deserved praise* upon my pious opponents, and claim the *honour* of being their obedient servant in Christ, without robbing the Lamb of his peculiar *worthiness*, and God of his proper *honour, dominion, and praise.*

APPENDIX.

I FLATTER myself that the preceding discourse shows, 1. That it is very possible to preach *free grace*, without directly or indirectly preaching Calvinism and *free wrath*: and 2. That those who charge Mr. Wesley and me with subverting the Articles of our church, which guard the doctrine of grace, do us great wrong. Should God spare me, I shall also bear my testimony to the truth of the doctrine of *conditional* Predestination and Election, maintained in the 17th article, to which I have not had an opportunity of setting my seal in this work.

As I have honestly laid my Helvetic bluntness, and Antinomian mistakes before the public in my notes; I am not conscious of having misrepresented my old sermon in my enlarged discourse. Should however the *keener* eyes of my opponents discover any real mistake in my additions, &c. upon information I shall be glad to acknowledge and rectify it. Two or three sentences I have left out, merely because they formed *vain* repetitions, without adding any thing to the sense. But whenever I have, for conscience sake, made any alteration, that *affects*, or SEEMS to affect the doctrine, I have informed the reader of it, and of my reason for it in a note; that he may judge whether I was right twelve years ago, or whether I am now: and where there is no such note at the bottom of the page, there is an addition in the context, directing to the 5th *note*, where the alteration is acknowledged, and accounted for according to the reasonable condition which I have made in the preface.

I particularly recommend the perusal of *that* note, of the *first*, and of the *twenty-first*, to those who do not yet see their way through the straits of Pharisaism and Antinomianism, through which I have been obliged to steer my course in handling a text, which, of all others, *seems* at first sight best calculated to countenance the mistakes of my opponents.

Sharp-sighted readers will see by my sermon, that nothing is more difficult than *rightly to divide the word of God*. The ways of *Truth* and *Error* lie close together, though they never coincide. When some preachers say, that "The road to heaven passes very near the mouth of hell," they do not mean, that the road to heaven and

the road to hell are one and the same. If I assert, that the way of *Truth* runs parallel to the ditch of *Error*, I by no means intend to confound them. Let *Error* therefore come, in some things, ever so near to *Truth*, yet it can no more be the *Truth*, than a filthy ditch, that runs parallel to a good road, can be the road.

You wonder at the athletic strength of Milo, that brawny man, who stands like an anvil under the bruising fist of his antagonist: through the flowery paths of youth and childhood trace him back to his cradle; and, if you please, consider him unborn: he is Milo still. Nay view him just conceived or quickened, and though your naked eye scarcely discovers the *punctum saliens*, by which he differs from a nonentity or a lifeless thing; yet even then the difference between him and a nonentity is not only *real* but *prodigious*; for it is the vast difference between *something* and *nothing*, between *life* and *no life*—In like manner, trace back truth to its first stamina; investigate it till you find its *punctum saliens*, its first difference from error; and even then, you will see an *essential*, a *capital* difference between them, though your short-sighted or inattentive neighbour can perceive none.

It is often a thing little in appearance, that turns the scale of truth; nevertheless, the difference between a scale *turned* or *not turned*, is as real as the difference between a *just* and a *false* weight, between *right* and *wrong*. I make this observation: 1. To show that although my opponents come very near me in some things, and I go very near them in others, yet the difference between us is as essential as the difference between *light* and *darkness*, *truth* and *error*: and 2. To remind them and myself, that we ought so much the more to exercise Christian forbearance towards each other, as we find it difficult, whenever we do not stand upon our guard, to do justice to every part of the truth, without seeming to dissent even from ourselves. However, our short-sightedness and twilight knowledge do not alter the nature of things. The truth of the Anti-Pharisaic and Anti-Crispian Gospel is as immutable as its eternal Author; and whether I have marked out its boundaries with a tolerable degree of justness or not, I must say as the heathen poet:

Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines,
Quos, ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum.*

* Truth is confined within her firm bounds, nay, there is a middle line equally distant from all extremes; on that line she stands, and to miss her, you need only step over it to the right hand or to the left.



A

SCRIPTURAL ESSAY

ON THE

ASTONISHING

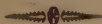
REWARDABLENESS OF WORKS

ACCORDING TO THE

COVENANT OF GRACE:

CONTAINING,

- I. A VARIETY OF PLAIN SCRIPTURES, WHICH SHOW THAT HEAVEN ITSELF IS THE GRACIOUS REWARD OF THE WORKS OF FAITH, AND THAT BELIEVERS MAY LOSE THAT REWARD BY BAD WORKS.
- II. AN ANSWER TO THE MOST PLAUSIBLE OBJECTIONS OF THE SOLIFIDIANS AGAINST THIS DOCTRINE.
- III. SOME REFLECTIONS UPON THE UNREASONABLENESS OF THOSE WHO SCORN TO WORK WITH AN EYE TO THE REWARD WHICH GOD OFFERS TO EXCITE US TO OBEDIENCE.



To the law and to the testimony.—Isa. viii. 2.



SCRIPTURAL ESSAY

ON THE ASTONISHING REWARDABLENESS OF WORKS ACCORDING TO
THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

PART FIRST.

HAVING particularly guarded, in the preceding discourse, the doctrine of SALVATION *by the covenant of grace*, and having endeavoured to secure the *foundation* of the Gospel against the unwearied attacks of the *Pharisees*; I shall now particularly guard the *WORKS of the covenant of grace*, and by that mean I shall secure the *superstructure* against the perpetual assaults of the *Antinomians*; a part of my work this, which is so much the more important, as the use of a strong *foundation* is only to bear up a useful structure.

None but fools act without motive. To deprive a wise man of every motive to act, is to keep him in total inaction: and to rob him of some grand motive, is considerably to weaken his willingness to act, or his fervour in acting. The burning love of God is undoubtedly the most generous motive to obedience; but alas! thousands of good men, like Cornelius, are yet strangers to that powerful principle *shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost*: in thousands of weak believers, love is not yet properly kindled; it is rather a *smoking flax*, than a blazing fire: in thousands of Laodicean professors it is scarcely *lukewarm*; and in all apostates it is *waxed cold*. Therefore, in the present sickly state of the church militant, it is as absurd in preachers to urge no motive of good works but *grateful love*, as it would be in physicians to insist, that a *good stomach* must be the only motive, from which their patients ought to take either food or physic.

Our Lord, far from countenancing our doctrinal refinements in this respect, perpetually secures the practice of good works, by *promising heaven* to all that persevere in doing them; while he deters us from sin, by *threatening destruction* to all that persist in committing it;

working thus alternately upon our *hopes* and *fears*, those powerful springs of action in the human breast.

The force of this double incentive to practical religion, I greatly weakened; when, being carried away by the stream of Solifidianism, I rashly said in my old sermon, after some of our Reformers, that “good works shall be rewarded *in* heaven and eternal life, although not *with* eternal life and heaven.” An Antinomian error this, which I again publicly renounce, and against which I enter the following scriptural protest.

If the oracles of God command us to work FROM an *initial* life of *grace*, FOR an *eternal* life of *glory*; frequently annexing the promise of heavenly bliss to good works, and threatening all *workers of iniquity* with hell torments; it follows, that heaven will be the *gracious reward* of good works, and hell the *just wages* of bad ones.

I readily grant, however, that if we consider ourselves merely as *sinner*s, in the light of the *first* Gospel axiom, and according to the *covenant of works*, which we have so frequently broken; heaven is MERELY the *GIFT* of God through our Lord Jesus Christ: for according to *that* covenant, destruction is the wages of all who have committed sin. But if we be *converted* sinners, or obedient *believers*; and if we consider ourselves in the light of the *second* Gospel axiom, and according to the *covenant of grace*; every unprejudiced person, who believes the Bible, must allow that heaven is the gracious REWARD of our works of faith.

An illustration may help the reader to see the justness of this distinction.—A charitable nobleman discharges the debts of ten insolvent prisoners; sets them up in great or little farms, according to their respective abilities; and laying down a thousand pounds before them, he says: “I have already done much for you, but I will do more still. I freely give you this purse to encourage your industry. You shall share this gold among you, if you manage your farms according to my directions: but if you let your fields be overrun with thorns, you shall not only lose the bounty I design for the industrious, but forfeit all my preceding favours.” Now, who does not see, that the thousand pounds thus laid down are a *free gift* of the nobleman; that nevertheless, upon the performance of the condition or terms he has fixed, they become a gracious reward of industry; and that, consequently, the obtaining of this reward turns now entirely upon the *works of industry* performed by the farmers.

Just so eternal salvation is the *free gift* of God through Jesus Christ: and yet the *obtaining* of it (on the part of adults) turns entirely upon their *works of faith*; that is, upon their *works* as well

as upon their faith. Hence the Scripture says indifferently, *He that BELIEVETH IS NOT CONDEMNED*; and *If thou DOEST WELL shalt thou not be ACCEPTED?* *All that BELIEVE are JUSTIFIED*; and *he that WORKETH righteousness is ACCEPTED*.—Our Lord, speaking of a weeping penitent, says equally: *Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she LOVED much*; and, *Thy sins are forgiven, thy FAITH hath saved thee*.—As for St. Paul, though he always justly excludes the works of unbelief, and merely ceremonial works, yet he so joins *faith*, and the *works* of faith, as to show us, they are equally necessary to eternal salvation: *There is no condemnation*, says he, *to them that are in Christ by faith*: (Here is the Pharisee's portion) *who WALK not after the flesh but after the Spirit*: (Here is the Antinomian's portion.) Hence it appears, that living faith, *now* and always works righteousness; and that the works of righteousness *now** and always accompany faith, so long as it remains *living*.

"I know this is the doctrine," says the judicious Mr. Baxter "that will have the loudest outcries raised against it; and will make some cry out Heresy, Popery, Socinianism! and what not! For my own part, the Searcher of hearts knoweth, that not singularity, nor any good will to Popery, provoketh me to entertain it: but that I have earnestly sought the Lord's direction upon my knees, before I durst adventure on it; and that I resisted the light of this conclusion as long as I was able." May this bright testimony make way for an illuminated cloud of prophets and apostles! and may the Sun of Righteousness, rising behind it, so scatter the shades of error, that we may awake out of our Laodicean sleep, and Antinomian dreams, and see a glorious unclouded Gospel day!

That in subordination to Christ, our *eternal* salvation depends upon good works, i. e. upon the works of faith, will, I think, appear indubitable to them that believe the Bible, and candidly consider the following scriptures, in which HEAVEN and eternal life IN GLORY are suspended upon *works*, if they spring from a sincere *belief* in the light of our dispensation; I say, if they spring from true *faith*, it being absolutely impossible for a *heathen*, and much more for a *Christian*, to work righteousness without BELIEVING, in some degree, *that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, as well as the punisher of them that presumptuously sin against him.—*For without faith it is impossible to please God*; all faithless works springing merely from superstition, like those of Baal's priests, or from hypo-

* I use the word *now*, to stop up the Antinomian gap, which one of my opponents tries to keep open by insinuating, that though a true believer may commit adultery and murder *now*, yet he will *always* work righteousness before he die.

crisy, like those of the Pharisees. Having thus guarded again the doctrine of FAITH, I produce some of the many scriptures that *directly or indirectly* annex the above-mentioned reward to WORKS : And,

1. To *consideration, conversion, and exercising ourselves to godliness*.—"Because he *considereth*, and *turneth* away from his transgressions, &c. he shall surely *live*, he shall *not die*. When the wicked man *turneth* away from his wickedness, &c. he shall *save his soul alive*. Wherefore *turn yourselves and live ye*.—*Exercise thyself unto godliness*, for it is profitable unto all things ; having the promise of the life that now is, and that *which is to come*."

2. To *doing the will of God*.—"He that does the will of my Father, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.—He that does the will of God *abideth for ever*.—Whosoever shall *do* the will of God, the same is my brother and sister—i. e. the same is an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ."

3. To *confessing Christ, and calling upon the name of the Lord*.—"With the mouth *confession is made to salvation*.—Whosoever therefore shall *confess* me before men, him will I *confess* also before my Father : But whosoever shall *deny* me before men, him will I also *deny* before my Father.—Whosoever shall *call* upon the name of the Lord shall be *saved*."

4. To *self-denial*.—"If thy hand offend thee, *cut it off* : it is better to enter into *life* maimed, than having two hands to go to *hell*, &c. And if thine eye offend thee, *pluck it out* : it is better for thee to enter into the *kingdom of God* with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into *hell fire*.—There is no man that *hath left* house or brethren, &c. for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now, and in the world to come *eternal life*.—He that *loseth* his life for my sake shall find it, &c.—He that *hateth* his life in this world, shall keep it unto *life eternal*."—And our Lord supposes that by "*gaining the world*" a man may "*lose his own soul*." For, according to the covenant of grace, even reprobates are not totally lost, till they make themselves sons of *perdition*, like Judas, i. e. till they personally and absolutely *lose their own souls* and heaven, by their personal and obstinate pursuit of worldly things.

5. To *diligent labour and earnest endeavours*.—"O man of God, *lay hold* on *eternal life*.—*Work out* your own *salvation*.—*Labour* for the meat that endureth to *everlasting life*.—*Keep* thy heart with all *diligence*, for out of it are the issues of *life*.—In so *doing* thou shalt *save* thyself.—Narrow is the gate that leads to *life*.—*Strive* to enter in.—The violent *press* into the kingdom of God, and take it by force."

6. *To keeping the commandments.*—"Blessed are they that do his commandments, &c. that they may enter through the gates into the city, (i. e. into heaven.)—There shall *in nowise* enter into it any thing that *worketh* abomination.—If thou wilt enter into *life*,* keep the commandments.—Thou hast answered right: This *do*, and thou shalt *live*.—There is one *Lawgiver*, who is able to *save* and to *destroy*:" (some of whose laws ran thus :) 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.—Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.—With what judgment ye *judge*, ye shall be *judged*.—For he shall have judgment *without mercy*, that hath *showed no mercy*.—BLESSED are the *peacemakers*, for they shall be called the children of God," (and of course, the heirs of the kingdom.)—"The King shall say unto them, Come, ye BLESSED of my Father, *inherit the kingdom* prepared for you, for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, &c.—Whatsoever ye *do*, do it heartily, as to the Lord, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the REWARD of the *inheritance*: but he that *does wrong*, shall receive for the wrong which he hath *done*, and there is no respect of persons.—Be ye therefore *followers* of God as dear *children*, &c. for this ye know, that NO *whoremonger*, &c. hath ANY *inheritance* in the kingdom of God.—The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, *adultery*, &c. of which I tell you (believers) that they who do such things, shall not *inherit* the kingdom of God."

7. *To running, fighting, faithfully laying up treasure in heaven, and feeding the flock of God.*—"They who run in a race, run all; but one receiveth the prize: So run, that you may obtain. Now they are *temperate* in all things to obtain a corruptible crown; but we, an *incorruptible*. I therefore so run—*fight*—and bring my body into subjection, (that I may obtain :) lest I myself should be cast away;" i. e. should not be approved of, should be rejected, and lose my *incorruptible crown*.—"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on *eternal life*.—Lay up treasure in heaven.—Make yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when you fail on earth, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.—Charge them who are rich, that they *do good*, that they be rich in good works, *laying up* in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on *eternal life*.—Feed the flock of God, &c. being examples to the flock, and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive the crown of glory, that fadeth not away."

8. *To love and charity.*—"Though I have all faith, &c. and have no

* See the excellent comment of our Church upon these words of our Lord, Fourth Check, Vol. i.

charity, I am nothing.—She, (the woman) shall be *saved*, &c. if they (womankind) continue in faith and *charity*.—Whosoever *hateth* his brother hath *not eternal life*.—He that *loveth not* his brother abideth in *death*.—We know we have passed from death unto *life*, because we *love* the brethren.—If any man *love not* the Lord Jesus, let him be *anathema*.—The *crown of life*, which the Lord hath promised to them that *love him*.”

9. *To a godly walk*. “There is no condemnation to them, &c. that *walk not* after the flesh.—As many as *walk* according to this rule, *mercy* (be, or will be) on them.—If we *walk* in the light (of good works, Matt. v. 15.) the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.—The Lord will give *grace and glory*, and no good thing will he withhold from them that *walk uprightly*.—Many (*fallen believers*) *walk*, &c. enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is *destruction*.”

10. *To persevering watchfulness, prayer, &c.* “He that *endureth* unto the end, the same shall be *saved*.—Be *faithful* unto death, and I will give thee the *crown of life*.—Blessed is the man that *endureth* temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the *crown of life*.—Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee, &c.—To him that *overcometh*, will I grant to sit with me in my throne.—To him that *keepeth my words* unto the end, &c. will I give the *morning star*.—Take heed to yourselves, &c. *watch and pray always*, that ye may be counted *worthy to escape*, &c. and to stand before the Son of man.” In a word,

11. *To patient continuance in mortifying the deeds of the body, and in well-doing*.—“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall *die*; but if ye through the Spirit *mortify* the deeds of the body, ye shall *live*.—For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap *perdition*; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap *life everlasting*. And let us not be weary in *well-doing*, for in due season we shall REAP (not, if we faint or not, but) IF we faint not.—He that *reapeth receiveth wages*, and gathereth fruit unto *life eternal*.—Ye have *your fruit* unto holiness, and the end *everlasting life*.”—God, at the revelation of his righteous judgment, “will render to every man according to his *deeds*; *eternal life* to them, who by patient continuance in *well-doing*, seek for *glory*.—Anguish upon every soul of man that *does evil*, &c. but *glory* to every man that *worketh good*, &c. for there is no respect of persons with God.”

Is it not astonishing, that, in sight of so many plain scriptures, the Solifidians should still ridicule the passport of good works, and give it to the winds as a “paper-kite?” However, if the preceding texts

do not appear sufficient, I can send another volley of Gospel truths, to show that the initial salvation of believers themselves may be *lost* through bad works.

“ I know thy *works*, &c. so then because thou art lukewarm I will spue thee out of my mouth.—What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man (*viz*, any one, and two verses below, any one of you, James ii. 14, 16.) ‘say he hath faith, and hath not works (*now?*)’ can faith save him? &c. Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.—Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be *condemned*, (in the original it is the same word which is rendered *damned*, Mark xvi. 16.)—‘ If we suffer, we shall also reign with him : if *we* (believers) *deny* him, he will also deny us.—Add to your faith *virtue*, &c. charity, &c. if ye *do* these things ye shall never fall, for so an *ENTRANCE* shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the *everlasting kingdom* of our Lord.—It had been *better* for them, that have escaped the pollutions of the world through the *knowledge of our Saviour*, (i. e. for believers) not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to *turn* from the *holy commandment* delivered unto them.—*Every tree*, that bringeth not forth good fruit is *cut down*, and cast into the *fire*.—*Every branch IN ME*, that beareth not fruit, my Father taketh away. Abide in me, &c. If a man abide not in me (by keeping my commandments in faith) he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and (he shall share the fate of the branches that have *really* belonged to the natural vine, and now bear no more fruit) men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”—The fig-tree in the Lord’s moral vineyard is cut down, for *not bearing fruit*.—“ Him that *sinneth* I will blot out of my book.—Some, having put away a *good conscience*, concerning *faith* have made *shipwreck*.—Such as *turn back* to their own wickedness, the Lord shall lead them forth with the *evil doers*.—Towards thee, goodness, if (by continuing in obedience) thou *continue* in his goodness, otherwise thou shalt be *cut off*.”

Again, “ For the wickedness of their *doings*, I will drive them out of my house, I will *love* them *no more*.—Some are already *turned aside* after Satan :—having *damnation*, because they have *cast off* their *first faith* ;—the faith that *works* by love ; the mystery of faith kept in a *pure conscience* ;—the *faith unfeigned* (that the apostle couples with) a *good conscience* ;—the faith that is made perfect by works ;” —the faith that cries like Rachel, *Give me children*, give me good works, or *else I die* ;—the faith that faints without obedience, and actually *dies* by bad works ; the following scriptures abundantly

proving that *faith*, and consequently the *just who live by faith*, may die by bad works.

“When a righteous man* doth turn from his *righteousness*, and commit iniquity, &c. he shall DIE in his sin, and his *righteousness*, which he has done, shall not be remembered.” Ezek. iii. 20.—Again, “When the *righteous*, &c. does according to all the *abominations* that the wicked man does, shall he live? All his *righteousness* that he has done, shall not be mentioned : in his *trespass* that he hath trespassed, and in his *sin* that he hath sinned, in them shall he DIE.” Ezek. xviii. 24.—Once more : “The *righteousness* of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression, &c. When I say to the *righteous* that he shall surely live;† if he trust to his *righteousness*, and commit iniquity, he shall die for it.” Ezek. xxxiii. 13.

It seems that God, foreseeing the Solifidians would be hard of belief, notwithstanding the great ado they make about *faith*, condescended to their infirmity, and kindly spoke the same thing over and over ; for, setting again the broad seal of heaven to the truth that chiefly guards the second Gospel axiom, he says for the fourth time, “When the righteous turneth from his *righteousness*, and committeth iniquity, he shall even DIE thereby : But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall LIVE thereby.” Ezek. xxxiii. 18, 19.

If Ezekiel be not allowed to be a competent judge, let *Christ himself* be heard : “Then his Lord said unto him : O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, &c. Shouldest not thou also have

* That this is spoken of a *truly* righteous man, i. e. of a believer, appears from the following reasons : 1. The righteous here mentioned, is opposed to the *wicked* mentioned in the context ; as surely then as the word *wicked* means there one *really* wicked, so does the word *righteous* mean here one *truly* righteous. 2. The righteous man's turning from his *righteousness*, is opposed to the wicked man's turning from his iniquity. If therefore the righteous man's *righteousness* is to be understood of *feigned* goodness, so the wicked man's iniquity must be understood of *feigned* iniquity. 3. The crime of the righteous man here spoken of is *turning from his righteousness* : but if his *righteousness* were only a hypocritical *righteousness*, he would rather deserve to be commended for renouncing it ; a wicked, sly Pharisee, being more odious to God than a barefaced sinner, who has honesty enough not to put on the mask of religion, Rev. iii. 15. 4. Part of this apostate's *punishment* will consist in *NOT* having the *righteousness* that he has done remembered : but if his *righteousness* is a false *righteousness*, or mere hypocrisy, the divine *threatening* proves a precious *promise* ; for you cannot please a hypocrite better, than by assuring him, that his hypocrisy shall never be remembered. What a pity is it, that to defend our mistakes we should fix egregious nonsense, and gross contradiction upon the only *wise* God !

† These words are another indubitable proof, that the *righteous* here mentioned is a *truly* righteous person ; as the holy and true God would never say to a wicked Pharisee, that he shall surely live.

had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors." Matt. xviii. 26, &c.

All the preceding scriptures are thus summed up by our Lord, Matt. xxv. 46. *These (the persons who have not finally done the works of faith) shall go into everlasting punishment; but the righteous (those who have done them to the end, at least from the time of their reconversion, if they were backsliders) shall go into eternal life.* This doctrine agrees perfectly with the conclusion of the sermon on the mount: *Whosoever HEARETH these sayings of mine, and DOETH THEM; I will liken him to a WISE man, who built his house upon a rock: and every one that HEARETH these sayings of mine, and DOETH THEM NOT, shall be likened unto a FOOLISH man, who built his house upon the sand.*—Nay, this is Christ's explicit doctrine. No words can be plainer than these: *They that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have DONE GOOD, unto the resurrection of LIFE; and they that have DONE EVIL, unto the resurrection of CONDEMNATION,* John v. 29. All creeds, therefore, like that of St. Athanasius, and all faith, must end in practice. This is a grand article of what might, with peculiar propriety, be called *the catholic faith*—the faith that is common to, and essential under, *all* the dispensations of the everlasting Gospel, in *all* countries and ages—"the faith which, except a man believe *faithfully*," i. e. so as to *work righteousness* like the good and *faithful* servant, "he cannot be saved."

PART SECOND.

AS some difficulties probably rise in the reader's mind against the preceding doctrine, it may not be amiss to produce them in the form of objections, and to answer them more fully than I have yet done.

I. OBJECTION. "All the Scriptures, that you have produced, are nothing but *descriptions* of those who shall be saved or damned. You have therefore no ground to infer from such texts, that in the great day our works of faith shall be rewarded with an eternal life of glory, and our bad works punished with eternal death."

ANSWER. Of all the paradoxes advanced by mistaken divines, your *assertion* is perhaps the greatest. You have no more ground for it, than I have for saying, that England is a lawless kingdom, and that all the promises of rewards, and threatenings of punishments, stamped with the authority of the legislative power, are no legal sanctions. If I seriously maintained, that the bestowing of public bounties upon the inventors of useful arts;—that the discharge of

some prisoners, and the condemnation of others, according to the statutes of the realm, are things which take place without any respect to law ;—that the acts of parliament are mere *descriptions* of persons, which the government *rewards, acquits, or punishes* without any respect to *worthiness, innocence, or demerit*—and that the judges absolve or condemn criminals merely out of *free grace and free wrath* :—if I maintained a paradox so dishonourable to the government, and so contrary to common sense, would you not be astonished ? And if I gave the name of *Papist* to all that did not receive my error as Gospel, would you not recommend me to a dose of Dr. Monro's hellebore ?—And are they much wiser, who fix the foul blot upon the divine government, and make the Protestants believe, that the sanctions of the King of kings, and the judicial dictates of Him who judges the world in righteousness, are not laws and sentences, but *representations and descriptions* ?

A comparison will show the frivolousness of your objection : There is, if I mistake not, a statute that condemns a highwayman to be hanged, and allows a reward of forty pounds to the person that takes him. A counsellor observes, that this statute was undoubtedly made to deter people from going upon the highway, and to encourage the taking of robbers. “Not so,” says a lawyer from Geneva ; “though robbers are hanged *according to law*, yet the men that take them are not *legally* rewarded ; the sum mentioned in the statute is given them of free, gratuitous, undeserved, unmerited, distinguishing grace.”—Nay, says the counsellor, if they do not deserve the forty pounds more than other people, that sum might as well be bestowed upon the highwaymen themselves, as upon those who take them at the hazard of their life.—“And so it might,” says the Geneva lawyer : “for although poor, blind legalists make people believe, that the promissory part of the law was made to excite people to exert themselves in the taking of robbers ; yet we know better at Geneva ; and I inform you, that the clause you speak of is only a *description* of certain men, for whom the government designs the *reward* of forty pounds *gratis*.” The admirers of Geneva logic clap their hands, and cry out, “Well said ! down with *legality* !” but an English jury smiles, and cries, “Down with *absurdity* !” See Fourth Check, Vol. i. p. 344.

II. OBJ. “You confound our *title* to, with our *meetness* for, heaven, two things which we carefully distinguish. Our *title* to heaven being solely what Christ has done and suffered for his people, has nothing to do with either our holiness or good works : but, our *meetness* for heaven supposes holiness, if not good works. Therefore, God's

unconverted sinful people, who have in Christ a complete *title* to heaven by right of '*finished salvation*,' SHALL all be made *meet* for heaven IN THE DAY OF HIS POWER."

Ans. 1. I understand you, and so does Mr. Fulsome. You insinuate that, till THE DAY you speak of comes, unconverted sinners and backsliders may indulge themselves, like the servant mentioned in the Gospel, who said, *My master delayeth his coming, and began to drink with the drunken*; but alas! instead of "a day of power," he saw a day of vengeance, and his "*finished salvation*," so called, ended in weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

2. Your distinction is contrary to the *Scriptures*, which represent ALL impenitent workers of iniquity as having a *full title to hell* according to both law and Gospel; so far are the oracles of God from supposing, that *some* workers of iniquity have a *full title to heaven*, absolutely independent on the obedience of faith.

3. It is contrary to *reason*; for reason dictates that whosoever has a full TITLE to a *punishment*, or to a *reward*, is fully MEET for it. Where is the difference between saying, that a murderer is *fully meet for*, or that he *has a full title to*, the gallows? If a palace richly furnished was bestowed upon the most righteous man in the kingdom, and you were the person; would it not be absurd to distinguish between your *title to*, and your *meetness for*, that RECOMPENSE? Or, if the king, in consequence of a valuable consideration received from the prince, had promised a coronet to every swift runner in England, next to the prince's interposition and his majesty's promise, would not your running well be at once your *title to*, and *meetness for*, that honour? And is not this the case, with respect to the incorruptible crowns reserved in heaven for those, who *so run* that they *may obtain*?

4. Your distinction draws after it the most horrid consequences: for if a *full title to heaven* may be separated from a *meetness for* the *lowest* place in heaven, it necessarily follows, that Solomon had a *full title to heaven* when he worshipped Ashtaroath; and the incestuous Corinthian, when he defiled his father's bed; in flat opposition to the dictates of every man's conscience (If you except Mr. Fulsome and his fraternity.) It follows, that St. Paul told a gross untruth, when he said, *This ye know, that no idolater, and no unclean person, hath ANY inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*—In a word, it follows, that believers, *sanctified with the blood of the covenant*, who *draw back to perdition*, (such as the Apostates, mentioned Heb. x. 29.) may have no title to heaven in all their sanctifying faith; while some

impenitent murderers, like David and Manasses, have a perfect title to it in all their crimes and unbelief.

5. This is not all : Our Lord's mark, *By their fruits ye shall know them*, is absolutely wrong if you are right : for your distinction abolishes the grand characteristic of the children of God, and those of the devil, which consists in *not committing or committing iniquity, in doing or not doing righteousness*, according to these plain words of St. John, *He that committeth sin is of the devil—in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil : whosoever DOES NOT righteousness, is NOT of God, neither he that loveth not* (much less he that murders) *his brother*, 1 John iii. 8, 10.—Thus the Lord's sacred enclosure is broken down, his sheepfold becomes a fold for goats, a dog-kennel, a swine-sty.—Nay, for what you know, all bloody adulterers may be *sheep in wolves' clothing* : while all those that have escaped the pollution that is in the world, may only be *wolves in sheep's clothing* ; it mattering not, with regard to the goodness of our title to heaven, whether *filthiness to Belial*, or *holiness to the Lord*, be written upon our foreheads. O Sir, how much more dangerous is your scheme than that of the primitive Babel-builders ! They only brought on a confusion of the original language ; but your doctrine confounds light and darkness, promises and threatenings, the heirs of heaven and those of hell, the seed of the woman and that of the serpent.

6. As to your intimation, that holiness is secured by teaching, that God's people *SHALL absolutely be made willing* to forsake their sins, and to become righteous *IN THE DAY OF GOD'S POWER*, that so they may have a *meetness for*, as well as a *title to*, heaven ; it drags after it this horrid consequence : The devil's people, "*in the day of God's power,*" *SHALL absolutely be made willing* to forsake their righteousness, that they may have a *meetness for*, as well as a *title to*, hell : a bitter reverse this of your "*sweet Gospel !*"

To conclude : If by your distinction you only want to insinuate, that Christ is the grand, and properly meritorious procurer of our salvation, from first to last ; and that the works of faith are only a secondary, instrumental, evidencing cause of our *final* salvation, you mean just as I do. But if you give the world to understand, that election to eternal glory is *unconditional*, or, which comes all to one, that no sin can invalidate our title to heaven ; from the preceding observations it appears, that you deceive the simple, make Christ the minister of sin, and inadvertently poison the church with the rankest Antinomianism.

III. OBJ. "You call the *works of Christ* the PRIMARY and properly meritorious cause, and our *works of faith* the SECONDARY and instru-

mental cause of our *eternal* salvation. But, according to your doctrine, *our* works should be called the *first* cause, and *Christ's* work the *second*: for you make the final success of *Christ's* work, to depend upon *our* work; which is manifestly setting our performances above those of the Redeemer."

Ans. 1. When a gardener affirms, that he shall have no crop unless he dig and set his garden, does he manifestly set his work above that of the God of nature? And when we say, that "we shall not reap *final* salvation, if we do not work out our salvation," do we exalt ourselves above the God of grace?

2. Whether our free agency turns the scale for life or death to all eternity, Christ shall have the honour of having died to bestow an *initial* life of grace even upon those who choose death in the error of their ways, and to have made them gracious and sincere offers of an eternal life of glory. In this sense, then, Christ's work cannot be rendered ineffectual; it being his *absolute* decree, that the word of his grace shall be the savour of life to obedient *free* agents, and the savour of death to the disobedient. Therefore, if we *will* not have the *eternal* benefit of his redeeming work, we cannot take from him the eternal honour of having shed his blood even for those who tread it under foot, and who *bring upon themselves swift* DESTRUCTION *by denying the Lord that BOUGHT THEM.*

3. Christ is not dishonoured by the doctrine, that represents the effect of the greater wheel, as being thus *in part* suspended upon the turning of the less. The light of the sun shines in vain for me, if I shut my eyes. *Life* is a far nobler gift than *food*: I can give my starving neighbour bread, but I cannot give him life: nevertheless, the higher wheel stops, if the inferior is quite at a stand: he must die if he has no nourishment. Thus, by God's appointment, the preservation of all the first-born of the Israelites in Egypt depended upon the sprinkling of a lamb's blood; the life of all them that were bitten by the fiery serpents, was suspended on a look towards the brazen serpent; and that of Rahab and her friends hung, if I may so speak, on a scarlet thread.—Now, if God did not dishonour his wisdom, when he made the life of so many people to depend upon those seemingly insignificant *works*; and if he continues to make the life of all mankind depend upon *breathing*; is it reasonable to say, that he is dishonoured by his own doctrine, which suspends our *eternal* salvation upon the works of faith?

4. Your objection can be retorted. Most Calvinists grant, that our justification in the day of conversion depends upon *believing*. Thus the Rev. Mr. Madan, in his sermon on James ii. 24, p. 18. says,

“ Though the Lord Jesus has merited our justification before God, yet we are not actually justified, till he be received into the heart by faith, and rested on,” &c. Therefore, in the day of conversion, that great minister being judge, our *justification* is suspended on the *work* which he calls “ *receiving Christ*,” or “ *resting on him*.” And how much more may our *eternal salvation* be suspended on faith and works, i. e. on *resting upon Christ*, and *working righteousness*!

5. This is not all: both Mr. Madan and Mr. Hill call faith the *instrumental CAUSE* of our justification, and every body knows that the *effect* is always suspended on the *CAUSE*: now, if so great an effect as a sinner’s present justification may be suspended upon the *single CAUSE* of faith, why may not a believer’s eternal justification be suspended upon the *double CAUSE* of *faith* and its *works*? In a word, why must Mr. Wesley be represented as heterodox for insinuating, that *believing* and *working*, *instrumentally CAUSE* our *eternal justification*; when Mr. Madan wears the badge of orthodoxy, although he insinuates, that *believing instrumentally CAUSES* our *justification*?

If Mr. Madan say, that he allows *faith* to be an *instrumental CAUSE*, on account of its being the gift of God by which we receive *Christ*; I answer, that we allow the *work* of faith to be an *instrumental cause*, because it springs from the Spirit of *Christ*, and constitutes our likeness to *Christ*, and our evangelical righteousness; a righteousness this, which *Christ* came into the world to promote. For *God sending his Son, &c. condemned sin in the flesh, THAT the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*; i. e. who walk in *good works*.—If it is asserted, that there can be but *ONE instrumental cause* of our salvation, that is, *faith*; I appeal to reason, which dictates that Christian faith implies a variety of causes, such as *preaching Christ*, and *hearing him preached*: for faith comes by *hearing*, and hearing by the *word* of God. This argument, therefore, carries its own answer along with it.

6. To conclude: Mr. Madan, in the above-quoted sermon, p. 16, says with great truth; “ *Christ and faith* are not one and the same thing; how then can we reconcile the apostle with himself, when he says in one place, *We are justified by Christ*; and in another, we are *justified by faith*? This can only be done by having recourse to the plain distinction, which the Scriptures afford us, in considering *Christ* as the *meritorious cause*, and *faith* as the *instrumental cause*, or that by which the *meritorious cause* is applied unto us, so that we are benefited thereby.”—Now all our heresy consists in applying Mr. M.’s judicious reasoning to *all* the scriptures, that guard the second Gospel

axiom, thus: "How can we reconcile the apostle with himself, when he says in one place, *We are saved by Christ*, and in other places, *We are saved by faith*, *we are saved by hope*—*Work out your own salvation*—*Confession is made to salvation*, &c. for Christ and *faith*, Christ and *hope*, Christ and *works*, Christ and *making confession*, are not one and the same thing? This seeming inconsistency in St. Paul's doctrine vanishes by admitting a plain distinction, which the Scriptures afford us: that is, 1. By considering *Christ*, from first to last, as the properly meritorious *cause* of our present and eternal salvation: 2. By considering *faith* as the *instrumental CAUSE* of our salvation from the guilt and pollution of sin on earth: And 3. by considering the *works* of faith, not only as the *evidencing CAUSE* of our justification in the great day, but also as an *instrumental CAUSE* of our *continuing* in the life of faith; just as eating, drinking, breathing, and such works, that *spring from* natural life, are instrumental causes of our *continuing in* natural life." Thus *faith*, and its *works*, are two inferior *CAUSES*, whereby the properly meritorious *CAUSE* is so completely applied to obedient, persevering believers, that they are now, and for ever shall be, benefited by it. As I flatter myself that this sixfold answer satisfies the candid reader, I pass on to another plausible objection.

IV. OBJ. "Though you assert, that, from first to last, the works and sufferings of Christ are the grand, and properly meritorious *cause* of our salvation; yet, according to your scheme, man having a life of glory upon his *choice*, and heaven upon *working out* his salvation, the honour of *free grace* is not secured. For, after all, *free will* and human faithfulness, or unfaithfulness, turn the scale for eternal salvation or damnation."

ANS. 1. In the very nature of things we are free agents, or the wise and righteous God would act inconsistently with his wisdom and equity in dispensing *rewards* and *punishments*. If, through the *saving grace of God*, which has appeared to all men, we were not again endued with an awful power to *choose life*, and to be faithful, it would be as injudicious to *punish* or *recompense* mankind, as to whip a dead horse for not moving, condemn fire for burning, or grant water an eternal reward for its fluidity. 2. Were I ashamed of my moral free agency, I should be ashamed of the noble power that distinguishes me from the brute creation.—I should be ashamed of the Old Testament, and of Moses, who says: *Behold, I call heaven and earth to record, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life.*—I should be ashamed of the New Testament, and of Christ, who complains, *You WILL NOT come unto me that you*

might have life, i. e. You will not use the power, which my preventing grace has given you, that you might live here a life of faith and holiness, and be hereafter rewarded with a life of happiness and glory. —In a word, I should give up the second Gospel axiom, and tacitly reproach my Maker, who says ; *Why will ye die, O house of Israel? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*

3. To convince you, that *free agency*, and a right use of it, are by no means inconsistent with divine grace and genuine humility, I ask, Did not God endue our first parents with *free will*? Are not even some rigid Calvinists ashamed to deny it? If *free will* in man is a power dishonourable to God, did not our wise Creator mistake when he pronounced man *very good*, at the very time man was a *free willer*? For, how could man be *very good*, if he had within him a power that necessarily militates against the honour of God, as the Calvinists insinuate *free will* does?

4. I go one step farther, and ask, Did God ever endue *one child of Adam* with power to avoid one sin?—If you say, No : you contradict the Scriptures, your own conscience, and the consciences of all mankind : you fix the blot of folly on all the judges, who have *judicially* punished malefactors with death ; and, when you insinuate, that the Lawgiver of the universe will send all workers of iniquity personally into hell, for not *doing what is lawful and right to save their souls alive* ; or for not avoiding sin, when he never gave them the least power personally so to do ; you pour almost as much contempt upon his perfections as if you hinted, that he will one day raise all creeping insects, to judge them *according to their steps*, and to cast into a place of torment as many as did not move as swiftly as a race-horse.

If you answer in the affirmative, and grant, that God has graciously endued *one child of Adam* with power to avoid *one sin*, so far you hold *free will* as well as Moses and Jesus Christ. Now if God has bestowed *free will* upon *one child of Adam* with respect to the avoiding of *one sin* ; why not upon *two*, with respect to the avoiding of *two sins*? Why not upon *all*, with respect to the avoiding of *all the sins*, that are incompatible with the obedience of faith?

5. Again, as it would be *absurd* to say, that God gave a power to avoid *one sin*, only to *one child of Adam* : so it would be *impious* to suppose, God gave him this power, that, in case he faithfully used it, he should *necessarily* boast of it. Pharisaic boasting is then by no means the *necessary* consequence of our moral liberty, or of a proper use of our *free will*. Thus it appears, that your specious objection is founded upon a heap of paradoxes ; and that to embrace *free will*

lest we should not make enough of *free grace*, and to jump into *fatalism* lest we should be proud of our *free will*, is not less absurd than to prostrate ourselves before a traitor, lest we should not honour the king, and to run to a house of ill fame, lest we should be proud of our chastity.

6. Our doctrine secures the honour of *free grace* as well as Calvinism. You will be convinced of it, if you consider the following articles of our creed with respect to *free grace*. 1. Before the fall, the *free grace* of our *Creator* gave us in Adam holiness, happiness, and a power to continue in both.—2. Since the fall, the *free grace* of our *Redeemer* indulges us with a reprieve, an accepted time, a day of visitation and salvation; in a word, with a better covenant, and a *free gift that is come upon all men unto* (initial) *justification of life*, Rom. v. 18.—3. That nothing may be wanting on God's part, the *free grace* of our *Sanctifier* excites us to make a proper use of the free gift, part of which is *moral liberty*.—4. Thus even our *free will* to good is all of creating, redeeming, and sanctifying grace: therefore, with regard to that glorious power, as well as to every other talent, we humbly ask with St. Paul, *What hast thou, that thou hast not received?*—5. This is not all: We are commanded to *account the long-suffering of God* (a degree of) *SALVATION*; and so it is: for, without forcing, or necessarily inclining, our will, God's *providential free grace* disposes a thousand circumstances in such a manner, as to second the calls of the everlasting Gospel. The gracious Preserver of men works daily a thousand wonders to keep us out of the grave, and out of hell. A thousand wheels have turned ten thousand times, in and out of the church, to bring us the purest streams of Gospel truth. Countless breathings of the *Spirit of grace* add virtue to those streams; *free grace* therefore not only *prevents*, but also in numberless ways accompanies, follows, directs, encourages, and assists us in *all* the work of our salvation.

And yet, while *God* thus *works in us*, as the God of all grace, *both to will and to do of his good pleasure*; that is, while he thus gives us the *faculty to will*, and the *power to do*; and while he secretly by his Spirit, and publicly by his ministers and providences, excites us to make a proper use of that *faculty and power*; yet, as the God of wisdom, holiness, and justice, he leaves the *act* to our choice; thus treating us as rational creatures, whom he intends wisely to *reward*, or justly to *punish*, ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS, and not according to his own.

Hence it appears, that we go every step of the way with our Calvinist brethren, while they exalt Christ and free grace in a rational

and scriptural manner; and that we refuse to follow them only when they set Christ at nought as a Prophet, a Lawgiver, a Judge, and a King; under pretence of extolling him as a Priest; or when they put *wanton* free grace, and unrelenting *free* wrath, in the place of the *genuine* free grace testified of in the Scriptures.

V. OBJ. "One more difficulty remains: If I freely *obey* the Gospel and am *saved*; and if my neighbour freely *disobeys* it, and is *damned*, what makes me to differ from him? Is it not my free obedience of faith?"

ANS. Undoubtedly: and his *free* disobedience makes *him* differ from *you*: or it would be very absurd JUDICIALLY to acquit and reward *you* rather than him, *according to YOUR works*. And it would be strange duplicity, to condemn and punish *him* rather than *you* in a day of judgment, after the most solemn protestations, that equity and impartiality shall dictate the Judge's sentence.

As to the difficulty arising from St. Paul's question, 1 Cor. iv. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ?* to what I have said about it in the preceding sermon, p. 173. I add: 1. According to the covenant of works *all fall short of the glory of God*: and when any one asks with respect to the law of innocence, *Who makes thee to differ?* the proper answer is, "*There is no difference: every mouth must be stopped: all the world is guilty before God.—Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord.*"—But according to the covenant of grace, he that *freely* believes and obeys in the strength of *free* grace, undoubtedly makes himself to differ from him that, by obstinate disobedience, *does despite to the Spirit of grace*. If this point be given up, the Diana and the Apollo; or rather the Apollyon of the Antinomians (I mean *wanton* Free Grace, and merciless Free Wrath) are set up for ever. However,

2. If the question, *Who maketh thee to differ?* be asked with respect to the NUMBER of our talents, the proper answer is, "God's distinguishing grace alone maketh us to differ." And that this is the sense which the apostle had in view, is evident from the context. He had before reproved the Corinthians for *saying every one, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, &c.* and now he adds, *These things I have in a figure transferred to myself, and to Apollos, that ye might learn in us not to think (of gifted popular men, or of yourselves) above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another; for who maketh thee to differ? Why is thy person graceful? and why art thou naturally an eloquent man like Apollos, whilst thy brother's speech is rude, and his bodily presence weak and contemptible, like mine?* But,

3. If you ask, *Who maketh thee to differ*, with respect to the *improvement* or *non-improvement* of our gifts and graces? If you inquire, Whether God *necessitates* some to disbelieve, that they may *necessarily* sin and be damned; while he *necessitates* others to believe, that they may *necessarily* work righteousness and be saved; I utterly deny the last question, and in this sense St. Paul answers his own misapplied question thus. *Be not deceived: what a man* (not what God) *soweth, that shall he also reap, perdition* if he sow to the flesh, and *eternal life* if he sow to the Spirit. Nor am I either afraid or ashamed to second him, by saying upon the walls of Jerusalem, that in the last-mentioned sense, *We make ourselves to differ*. And Scripture, reason, conscience, the divine perfections, and the trump of God, which will soon summon us to *judgment*, testify that this reply stands as firm as one half of the Bible, and the second Gospel axiom on which it is immoveably founded.

Nay, there is not a promise or a threatening in the Bible, that is not a proof of our *Lawgiver's* want of wisdom, or of our *Judge's* want of equity, if we are not graciously endued with a capacity to make ourselves differ from the obstinate violators of the law, and despisers of the Gospel,—that is, if we are not *free* agents. There is not an exhortation, a warning, nor an entreaty in the sacred pages, that is not a demonstration of the penman's *folly*, or of the *freedom* of our will. In a word, there is not a sinner justly punished in hell, nor a believer wisely *rewarded* in heaven, that does not indirectly say to all the world of rationals, “*Though the God of grace draws thee to obedience, yet it is with the bands of a man. For after all, he leaves thee in the hand of thy counsel to keep the commandments, and perform acceptable obedience, IF THOU WILT. Before man is life and death, and whether him liketh shall be given him.*” *Ecclus. xv. 14, &c.*

But, although your obedience of faith makes you to differ from your condemned neighbour, you have no reason to reject the *first* Gospel axiom, and to indulge a *boasting** contrary to faith and free

* There is a twofold *glorying*: the one Pharisaic, and contrary to faith; of this St. Paul speaks, where he says, *Boasting is excluded, &c. by the law of faith*, Rom. iii. 27. The other evangelical, and agreeable to faith; since it is a believer's holy triumph in God, resulting from the testimony of a good conscience. Concerning it the apostle says, *Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing* [BOASTING] *in himself alone, and not in another*, Gal. vi. 4. [The word in the original is *καυχῆσθαι*, in one passage, and *καυχῆμα*, in the other.] These seemingly contrary doctrines are highly consistent; their opposition answering to that of the Gospel axioms. The first axiom allows of no glorying but in Christ, who has alone fulfilled the *law of works*, or the terms of the *first* covenant; but the second axiom allows obedient believers an humble *καυχῆμα*,

grace: for your *Christian Faith*, which is the root of your obedience, is peculiarly the *GIFT of God*; whether you consider it as to its precious *SEED* (*the word nigh*;) as to its glorious *OBJECT* (*Christ and the truth*;) as to the *MEANS*, by which that object is revealed, (such as *preaching and hearing*;) as to the *OPPORTUNITIES and FACULTIES* of using those means (such as *life, reason, &c.*) or as to the *SPIRIT OF GRACE*, whose assistance in this case is so important, that he is called the *Spirit of faith*.—And yet that Spirit does not act *irresistibly*; all believers *unnecessarily and freely* yielding to it, and all unbelievers *unnecessarily and freely* resisting it: so far only does the matter turn upon *free will*. Thus it appears that although the *act* of faith is *ours*, we are so much indebted to *free grace* for it, that believers can no more boast of being their own *saviours*, because they daily *believe and work* in order to their final salvation, than they can boast of being their own *preservers*, because they daily *breathe and eat* in order to their continued preservation.

On the other hand, although your condemned neighbour's disobedience makes him differ from you, he has no reason to reject the *second Gospel axiom*, and to exculpate himself by charging heaven with capricious partiality and horrid free wrath: because God, whose mercy is over all his works, and who is no respecter of persons, graciously bestowed a talent of free grace upon him as well as upon you, according to one or another of the divine dispensations. For the royal master, mentioned in the Gospel, gave a pound to the servant that buried it, as well as to him that gained ten pounds by occupying till his Lord came.

“But, upon that footing, what becomes of *DISTINGUISHING GRACE*?” If by *distinguishing grace* you mean *Calvinistic partiality*, I answer, It must undoubtedly sink together, with its inseparable partner, *unconditional reprobation*, into the pit of error, whence they ascended to fill the church with contentions, and the world with infidels. But if you mean *SCRIPTURAL distinguishing grace*, that is, the *manifold wisdom of God*, which makes him proceed gradually, and admit a pleasing variety in the works of grace, as well as in the productions

glorying or rejoicing, upon their personally fulfilling the *law of faith*, or the gracious terms of the *second covenant*, 2 Cor. i. 12. This rejoicing answers to what St. Paul calls the *witness of our own spirit*, or the *testimony of a good conscience*; which, next to the witness of the word and Spirit concerning God's mercy, and Christ's blood, is the ground of a Christian's confidence. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, &c. because we keep his commandments.* 1 John iii. 21, 22. And yet astonishing! this blessed *rejoicing*, so strongly recommended by St. Paul and St. John, who, one would think, knew something of the Gospel, is now represented by some modern evangelists, as the quintessence of *Pharisaism*!

of nature ;—if you mean his good pleasure to give the Heathens one talent, the Jews two, the Papists three, the Protestants four ; or if you mean the different methods which he uses to call sinners to repentance, such as his familiar expostulation with Cain—his wonderful warning of Lot's sons-in-law—his rousing king Saul by the voice of Samuel, and Saul of Tarsus by the voice of Christ ; (Samuel and Christ coming, or seeming to come from the invisible world, for that awful purpose)—his audibly inviting Judas and the rich ruler to follow him, promising the latter heavenly treasure, if he would give his earthly possessions to the poor—his shocking, by preternatural earthquakes, the consciences of the Philippian jailer, and the two malefactors that suffered with him—his awakening Ananias, Sapphira, and thousands more by the wonders of the day of Pentecost, when Lydia and others were called only in the common way :—If you mean this by DISTINGUISHING GRACE, we are agreed. For, grace displayed in as distinguishing a manner, as it was towards Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, greatly illustrates our Lord's doctrine : “ Of him to whom little is given, little shall be required ; but much shall be required of them that have received much ;” the equality of God's ways not consisting in giving to all men a like number of talents, any more than making them all archangels ; but in treating them all equally, according to the various editions of the everlasting Gospel, or law of liberty ; and according to the good or bad uses they have made of their talents, whether they had few or many.

To return to your grand objection : You suppose (and this is probably the ground of your mistake) that when a deliverance, or a divine favour, turns upon something, which we may do, or leave undone at our option, God is necessarily robbed of his glory. But a few queries will easily convince you of your mistake. When God had been merciful to Lot and his family, not looking back made all the difference between him and his wife ; but does it follow, that he claimed the honour of his narrow escape ;—looking at the brazen type of Christ made some Israelites differ from others, that died of the bite of the fiery serpents ; but is this a sufficient reason to conclude, that the healed men had not sense to distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* causes, and that they ascribed to their looks the glory due to God, for graciously contriving the means of their cure ? —One of your neighbours has hanged, and another has poisoned himself ; so that not hanging yourself, and taking wholesome food, has so far made the difference between you and them : but can you reasonably infer, that you do not live by divine bounty, and that I rob the

Preserver of men of his glory, when I affirm, that you shall surely die, if you do not eat, or if you take poison ?

Permit me to make you sensible of your mistake by one more illustration. An anti-calvinist, who observes that God has suspended many of his blessings upon industry, diligently ploughs, sows, and weeds his field. A Fatalist over the way, lest free grace should not have all the glory of his crop, does not turn* one clod, and expects seed to drop from the clouds into furrows made by an invisible plough on a certain day, which he calls "a day of God's power." When harvest comes, the one has a crop of wheat, and the other a crop of weeds. Now, although industry alone has made the difference between the two fields, who is most likely to give God the glory of a crop, the Solifidian farmer, who reaps thistles ? or the laborious husbandman, who has joined works to his faith in divine providence, and joyfully brings his sheaves home ; saying as St. Paul, By divine bounty I have planted, and Apollos has weeded, but God has given the increase, which is all in all ?

PART THIRD.

FLATTERING myself that the preceding answers have removed the reader's prejudices, or confirmed him in his attachment to genuine *free grace* ; I shall conclude this Essay by some reflections upon the pride, or prejudices of those who scruple working with an eye to the rewards, that God offers with a view to promote the obedience of faith.

" If heaven, (say such mistaken persons) if the enjoyment of God in glory, be the reward of obedience ; and if you work with an eye to that reward, you act from *self*, the *basest* of all motives. Love, and not self-interest, sets us, true believers, upon action : we work

* This is not spoken of *pious* Calvinists, for some of them are remarkably diligent in good works. They are *Solifidians* by halves ;—in principle, but not in practice. Their works outshine their errors. I lay nothing to their charge but inattention, prejudice, and glaring inconsistency. I compare them to diligent, good-natured druggists, who among many excellent remedies sell sometimes arsenic. They would not for the world take it themselves, or poison their neighbours ; but yet they freely retail it, and in so doing they are inadvertently the cause of much mischief. Mr. Fulsome, for example, could tell which of our Gospel ministers taught him that good works are *drugs*, and have nothing to do with eternal salvation. He could inform us, who lulled him asleep in his sins with the siren songs of "*unconditional election*," and "*finished salvation*," in the full extent of the words : that is, he could let us know who gave him his killing dose : and numbers of deists could tell us, that a bare taste or smell of Calvinism has made them loath the genuine doctrines of grace, just as tasting or smelling a *tainted* partridge has for ever turned some people's stomachs against partridge.

from gratitude, and not for profit; from life,* and not for life. To do good with an eye to a reward, though that reward should be a crown of life, is to act as a mercenary wretch, and not as a dutiful child, or a faithful servant."

This specious error, zealously propagated by Molinos, Lady Guion, and her illustrious convert, archbishop Fenelon, (though afterward renounced by him) put a stop to a great revival of the power of godliness abroad in the last century; and it has already struck a fatal blow at the late revival in these kingdoms. I reverence and love many that contend for this sentiment; but, my regard for truth overbalancing my respect for them, I think it my duty to oppose their mistake, as a pernicious refinement of Satan transformed into an angel of light: I therefore attack it by the following arguments.

1. This doctrine makes us *wise above what is written*. We read, that hunger, and want of bread, brought back the prodigal son. His father knew it, but instead of treating him as a hired servant, he entertained him as a beloved child.

2. It sets aside at a stroke a considerable part of the Bible, which consists in *threatenings* to deter evil workers, and in *promises* to encourage obedient believers. For if it be *base* to obey in order to obtain a *promised* reward, it is baser still to do it in order to avoid a *threatened* punishment. Thus the precious grace of *faith*, so far as it is exercised about divine *promises* and *threatenings*, is indirectly made void.

3. It decries *godly fear*, a grand spring of action, and preservative of holiness in all free agents, that are in a state of probation; and by this mean it indirectly charges God with want of wisdom, for putting that spring in the breast of innocent man in paradise, and for perpetually working upon it in his word and by his *Spirit*, which St. Paul calls *the Spirit of bondage unto FEAR*; because it helps us to *believe* the threatenings denounced against the workers of iniquity, and to *fear* lest ruin should overtake us, if we continue in our sins.

If ever there was a visible church without spot and wrinkle, it was when the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one

* The reader is desired to observe, that we recommend working from *life* and *gratitude* as well as our opponents. *Life* and *thankfulness* are two important springs of action, which we use as well as they. We maintain, that even those who have a name to live, and are DEAD in trespasses and sins, cannot be saved without strengthening the things that remain and are READY TO DIE; and that *thankfulness* for being out of hell, and for having a day of salvation through Christ, should be strongly recommended to the chief of sinners. But *thankfulness* and *life* are not all the springs necessary, in our imperfect state, to move all the wheels of obedience; and we dare no more exclude the other springs, because we have these two; than we dare cut off three of our fingers, because we have a little finger and a thumb.

soul. The worldly-mindedness of Ananias and Sapphira was the first blemish of the Christian, as Achan's covetousness had been of the Jewish Church on this side Jordan. God made an example of them as he had done of Achan, and St. Luke observes, that upon it, GREAT FEAR came upon ALL THE CHURCH; even such fear as kept them from falling after the same example of unbelief. Now were all the primitive Christians mean-spirited people, because they were filled with great fear of being punished, as the first backsliders had been, if they apostatized? Is it a reproach to righteous Noah, that Being moved with FEAR he prepared an ark for the SAVING of his house? And did our Lord legalize the Gospel, when he began to say to his disciples first of all, &c. I say unto you, MY FRIENDS, be not afraid of them that kill the body, &c. but FEAR Him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him?—Does this mean, be mercenary; yea, I say unto you, be mercenary?

4. Hope has a particular, necessary reference to promises, and good things to come. Excellent things are spoken of that grace. If St. Paul says, *Ye are saved through FAITH*, he says also, *We are saved by HOPE*. Hence St. Peter observes, that “*exceeding great PROMISES are given to us, that we might be partakers of the Divine nature: and St. John declares, Every man that hath this HOPE in him, purifieth himself even as God is pure.*” Now hope never stirs, but in order to obtain good things in view: a motive this, which our Gospel refiners represent as illiberal and base. Their scheme therefore directly tends to ridicule and suppress the capital Christian grace, which Faith guards on the left hand, and Charity on the right.

5. Their error springs from a false conclusion. Because it is mean to relieve a beggar with an eye to a reward from him, they infer, that it is mean to do a good work with an eye to a reward from God; not considering that a beggar promises nothing, and can give nothing valuable; whereas the Parent of good promises, and can give eternal life to them that obey him: their inference is then just as absurd as the following argument: “I ought not to set my heart upon an earthly, inferior, transitory good; therefore I must not set it upon the chief, heavenly, permanent good.—It is foolish to shoot at a wrong mark, therefore I must not shoot at the right; I must not aim at the very mark, which God himself has set up for me, ultimately to level all my actions at, next to his own glory, viz. the enjoyment of himself, the light of his countenance, the smiles of his open face, which make the heaven of heavens.”

6. God says to Abraham, and in him to all believers, *I am thy exceeding great REWARD*: hence, it follows, that the higher we rise

in holiness and obedience, the nearer we shall be admitted to the eternal throne ; and the fuller enjoyment we shall have of our God and Saviour, our reward and rewarder. Therefore, to overlook divine rewards, is to overlook God himself, who is *our great REWARD* ; and to slight *the life to come, of which godliness has the PROMISE*.

7. The error I oppose can be put in a still stronger light. Not to strive to obtain our *great reward* in full, amounts to saying : “ Lord, “ thou art beneath my aim and pursuit ; I can do without thee, or “ without *so much* of thee. I will not bestir myself, and do one thing “ to obtain either the fruition, or a fuller enjoyment of thy adorable “ self.”—An illustration or two, short as they fall of the thing illustrated, may help us to see the great impropriety of such a conduct. If the king offered to give all officers, who would distinguish themselves in the field, his hand to kiss, and a commission in the guards, that he might have them near his person ; would not military gentlemen defeat the intention of this gracious offer, and betray a peculiar degree of indifference for his majesty, if in the day of battle they would not strike one blow the more, on account of the royal promise ?

Again : when David asked, what shall be done to him that killeth the giant ? And when he was informed, that Saul would give him his daughter in marriage ; would the young shepherd have showed his regard for the princess, or respect for the monarch, if he had said, “ I am above minding rewards ; what I do, I do freely ; I scorn acting from so base a motive as a desire to secure the hand of the princess, and the honour of being the king’s son-in-law ?” Could any thing have been ruder, and more haughty than such a speech ? And yet, O see what evangelical refinements have done for us ! We, who are infinitely less before God, than David was before king Saul—we, worms of a day, are so blinded by prejudice, as to think it beneath us to mind the offers of the King of kings, or to strive for the rewards of the Lord of lords !

Wo to him that striveth in generosity with his Maker ! Let the potsherd strive thus with the potsherds of the earth : but let not the clay say to him that fashioneth it, “ What doest thou when thou stirrest me up to “ good works by the promise of thy rewards ? Surely, Lord, thou “ forgettest that the nobleness of my mind, and my doctrine of finished “ salvation, make me above running for a reward, though it should “ be for a life of glory, and Thyself. Whatever I do at thy command, “ I am determined not to demean myself ; I will do it as Araunab, “ like a king.” What depths of Antinomian pride may be hid under the covering of our voluntary humility !

8. The Calvinists of the last century, in their lucid intervals, saw the absolute necessity of working for heaven and heavenly rewards. We have a good practical discourse of J. Bunyan upon these words, *So run that you may obtain*. The burden of it is, "*If you will have heaven you must run for it.*" Whence he calls his sermon "*The heavenly footman.*"—And Matthew Mead,* a staunch Calvinist, in his treatise on *The good of early obedience*, p. 429, says with great truth, "Maintain ■ holy, filial fear of God : this ■ an excellent preservative " against apostacy, *By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil*, says " Solomon, and he tells you, *The fear of the Lord is the fountain of* " LIFE, *whereby men depart from the snares of DEATH* ; and backsliding " from Christ is one of the great snares of death. Think much of " the day of recompense, and of the glorious reward of perseverance " in that day : *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown* " of life. It is not those that begin well, but those who end well, " that receive the crown. It is not mercenary service to quicken " ourselves to obedience by the hope of a recompense. *Omnis amor* " *mercedis non est mercenarius*, &c. David said, *I have hoped for thy* " *salvation, and done thy commandments*. He encouraged himself to " duty by the hope of glory, &c. Hope of that glorious recompense " is of great service to quicken us to perseverance. And to the same " end does the apostle urge it : *Be unmoveable, always abounding in* " *the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not* " *in vain in the Lord.*"

9. When voluntary humility has made us wise above what is written by the apostles, and by our forefathers, it will make us look down with contempt, from the top of our fancied orthodoxy, upon the motives, by which the prophets took up their cross, to serve God and their generation. When St. Paul enumerates the works of Moses, he traces them back to their noble principle, *faith working by ■*

* As a proof of his being sound in the doctrines of Calvinistic grace and confusion, I present the reader with the following passage, taken from the same book, printed in London 1683—p. 307. "A believer is under the law for *conduct*, but not for *judgment*, &c. It is " the guide of his path, but not the judge of his state. The believer is bound to obey it, " but not to stand or fall by it" [That is, in plain English, He should obey, but his disobedience will never bring him under condemnation, and hinder him to stand in judgment.] "It is a rule of life, &c. and therefore it obliges believers as much as others, though upon " other motives, &c. For they are not to expect life or favour from it, nor fear the death " and rigour that comes by it. The law has no power to *justify* a believer, or *condemn* " him, and therefore can be no rule to *try* his state by :"—In flat opposition to the general tenor of the Scriptures, thus summed up by St. John, *In this*, namely committing or not committing sin, *the children of God ARE MANIFEST, and the children of the devil*. What this author says is true, if it be understood of the *Adamic law of innocence* : but if it be extended to St. Paul's *law of Christ*, and to St. James's *law of liberty*, it is one of the dangerous tenets that support the chair of the Antinomian man of sin.

well-ordered self-love (a love this, which is inseparable from the love of God and man ; the law of liberty binding us to love our neighbour *as ourselves*, and God *above ourselves*.) *He chose*, says the apostle, *to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, &c.* But why ? Because he was above looking at the prize ? Just the reverse : because *he had respect to the recompense of the reward*, Heb. xi. 26.

10. In the next chapter, the apostle bids us to take *Christ himself* for our pattern in the very thing which our Gospel refiners call mercenary and base ; *Looking to Jesus*, says he, *who, FOR THE JOY that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God* : the noble reward this, with which his mediatorial obedience was crowned, as appears from these words, *He became OBEDIENT unto death ; WHEREFORE God also hath highly exalted him*. If the scheme of those who refine the ancient Gospel appear to me in a peculiarly unfavourable light, it is when I see them impose upon the injudicious admirers of unscriptural humility, and make the simple believe, that they do God service when they indirectly represent Christ's obedience unto death as *imperfect*, and him as *mercenary*, actuated by a motive unworthy of a child of God. He says, *Every one that is PERFECT, shall be as his master* : but we (such is our consistency !) loudly decry perfection, and yet pretend to a higher degree of it than our Lord and Master. For he was not above *enduring the cross FOR THE JOY of sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God* : but we are so exquisitely perfect, that we will work *gratis*. It is mercenary, it is beneath us to work for glory !

11. I fear, this contempt is by some indirectly poured upon the Lord of glory, to extol the spurious *free grace* which is sister to *free wrath* ; and to persuade the simple, that “ *Works have nothing to do with our final justification and eternal salvation before God* : ” a dogma this, which is as contrary to reason, as it is to Scripture and morality ; it being a monstrous imposition upon the credulity of Protestants to assert, that works which God himself will *REWARD* with *final justification and eternal salvation*, have nothing to do with *that justification and that salvation before Him*. Just as if the *thing rewarded* had nothing to do with its *reward* before the *Rewarder* !

12. The most rigid Calvinists allow, that St. Paul is truly evangelical : but, which of the sacred writers ever spoke greater things of the rewardableness of works than he ? What can be plainer, what stronger than these words, which I must quote till they are minded :

Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, &c. knowing (i. e. considering) that of the Lord ye shall receive the REWARD of the inheritance. But he that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: for there is no respect of persons, Col. iii. 23, &c. Again: Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap perdition; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life, Gal. vi. 7, 8.

From these scriptures it is evident, that *doing good or bad works is like sowing good or bad seed; and that going to heaven or to hell, is like gathering what we have sown.* Now, as it is the MADNESS of *unbelievers* to sow wickedness, and to expect a crop of happiness and glory; so it is the WISDOM of *believers* to sow righteousness, expecting to *reap in due time if they faint not.* Nor do we act reasonably, if we do not sow more or less with an eye to *reaping*: for if *reaping* be quite out of the question with Protestants, they may as wisely sow chaff on a fallow, as corn in a ploughed field. Hence I conclude, that a believer may obey, and that, if he be judicious, he will obey, looking both to Jesus and to the rewards of obedience; and that the more he can fix the eye of his faith upon his exceeding great reward, and his great recompense of reward, the more he will abound in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love.

13. St. Paul's conduct with respect to rewards, was perfectly consistent with his doctrine. I have already observed, he wrote to the Corinthians, that he so ran and so fought, as to obtain an incorruptible crown; and it is well known, that in the Olympic games, to which he alludes, all ran or fought with an eye to a prize, a reward, or a crown. But in his epistle to the Philippians, he goes still farther; for he represents his running for a crown of life, his pressing after rewards of grace and glory, as the whole of his business. His words are remarkable: *This one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and REACHING FORTH unto those things which are before, I PRESS towards the mark FOR THE PRIZE of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* And when he had just run his race out, he wrote to Timothy, *I have finished my course: henceforth there is laid up for me, as for a conqueror, a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous JUDGE, shall give me at that day—the great day of retribution.* As for St. John, when he was perfected in love, we find him as “mercenary” as St. Paul: for he writes to the elect lady, and to her believing children, *Look to yourselves, that we LOSE NOT those things which WE HAVE WROUGHT, but that we receive a FULL REWARD.*

14. When I read such scriptures, I wonder at those, who are so wrapt up in the pernicious notion, that we ought not to work* for a life of glory, as to overlook even the *crown of life*, with which God will reward those who are *faithful unto death*. And I am astonished at the remains of my own unbelief, which prevent my being always ravished with admiration at the thought of the rewards offered to fire my soul into seraphic obedience. An idle country fellow, who runs at the wakes for a wretched prize, labours harder in his sportive race than, I fear, I do yet in some of my prayers and sermons. A sportsman, for the pitiful honour of coming in at the death of a fox, toils more than most professors do in the pursuit of their corruptions. How ought confusion to cover our faces! Let those that refine the Gospel glory in their shame: let each of them say, "I thank thee, O God, that I am not like a Papist, or like that Arminian, who looks at the rewards which thou hast promised: I deny myself, and take up my cross, without thinking of the joy and rewards set before me," &c. For my part, I desire to humble myself before God, for having so long overlooked the *exceeding great reward*, and the *crown of life*, promised to them that obey him: and my thoughts shall be expressed in such words as these:

"Gracious Lord, if he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall have a prophet's reward: if our light affliction, when it is patiently endured, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: if thou hast said, *Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again (from man) and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest*: if thou animatest those, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, by this promissory exhortation, '*Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven*:' Nay, if a cup of cold water only, given in thy name, shall in NOWISE lose its reward; and if the least of thy rewards is a smile of appro-

* Truth is so great that it sometimes prevails over those that are prejudiced against it. I have observed that Dr. Crisp himself, in a happy moment, bore a noble testimony to undetiled religion. Take another instance of it. In the volume of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield's sermons, taken in short hand, and published by Gurney, p. 119, that great preacher says, "*First, we must work for spiritual life, afterward FROM it.*"—And page 153, 154, he declares: "There are numbers of poor, that are ready to perish; and if you drop something to them in love, God will take care to *repay* you when you come to judgment." I find but one fault with this doctrine. The first of those propositions does not guard *free grace* so well as Mr. Wesley's Minutes do. We should always intimate, that there is no working for a life of glory, or for a more abundant life of grace, but *from* an initial life of grace, *freely* given to us in Christ *before* any working of our own. This I mention, not to prejudice the reader against Mr. Whitefield, but to show, that I am not so prejudiced in favour of *works*, as not to see when even a Whitefield, in an unguarded expression, leans towards them to the disparagement of *free grace*.

“ bation ; let me be ready to go round the world, shouldest thou call me to it, that I may obtain such a recompense.

“ Since thou hast so closely connected holiness and happiness, my duty and thy favours : *let no man beguile me of my reward in a voluntary humility ; nor suffer me to be carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. And whatsoever my hand findeth to do, help me to do it with all my might ; not only lest I lose my reward, but also lest I have not a full reward ; lest I lose a beam of the light of thy countenance, or ■ degree of that peculiar likeness and nearness to thee, with which thou wilt recompense those who excel in virtue. So shall I equally avoid the delusion of the Pharisees, who expect heaven through their faithless works ; and the error of the Antinomians, who hope to enter into thy glory without the passport of the works of faith.*

“ And now, Lord, if thy servant has found favour in thy sight, permit him to urge another request : so far as thy wisdom, and the laws by which thy free grace works upon free agents, will permit ; incline the minds of Papists and Protestants to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. Let not especially this plain testimony borne to the many great promises which thou hast made, and to the astonishing REWARDS which thou offerest them that work righteousness, be rejected by my Calvinist brethren. Keep them from fighting against thy goodness, and despising their own mercies, under pretence of fighting against ‘ Arminian errors,’ and despising ‘ Pelagian Checks to the Gospel.’ And make them sensible that it is absurd, to decry in word the Pope’s pretensions to infallibility, if by an obstinate refusal to ‘ review the whole affair,’ and to weigh their supposed orthodoxy in the balances of reason and revelation, they in fact pretend to be infallible themselves ; and thus, instead of one Catholic Pontiff, set up ten thousand Protestant Popes.

“ Thou knowest, Lord, that many of them love thee ; and that, though they disgrace thy Gospel by their doctrinal peculiarities, they adorn it by their godly conversation. O endue them with more love to their Remonstrant brethren ! Give them and me that charity which beaveth not itself unseemly, which rejoiceth not in a favourite error, but rejoiceth in the truth, even when it is advanced by our opponents. Thou seest, that if they decry true holiness and good works as ‘ dung and dross,’ it is chiefly for fear thy glory should be obscured by our obedience. Error transformed into an angel of light has deceived them, and they think to do thee service by propagating the deception. O gracious God, pardon them this wrong.

“ They *do it ignorantly in unbelief* ; therefore seal not up their mistake
 “ with the seal of thy wrath. Let them yet *know the truth*, and let
 “ the truth enlarge their hearts, and *make them free* from the notion,
 “ that thou art not *loving to every man* during the day of *salvation*, and
 “ that there is neither mercy nor Saviour for the most of their neigh-
 “ bours, even during the accepted time.

“ Above all, Lord, if they cannot defend their mistakes, either by
 “ argument or by Scripture, quoted according to the context, and the
 “ obvious tenor of thy sacred Oracles ; give them more *wisdom*, than
 “ to expose any longer the Protestant religion, which they think to
 “ defend ; and more *piety*, than to make the men of the world abhor
 “ thy Gospel, and blaspheme thy name, as free-thinkers are daily
 “ tempted to do, when they see that those who pretend to ‘ exalt
 “ thee’ most, are of all Protestants the most ready to disarm thy Gos-
 “ pel of its sanctions ; to turn thy judicial sentences into frivolous
 “ descriptions ; to overlook the dictates of reason and good nature ;
 “ and to make the press groan under illogical assertions, and per-
 “ sonal abuse !

“ Let thy servant speak once more : Thou knowest, O Lord, that
 “ thy power being my helper, I would choose to die rather than wil-
 “ fully to depreciate that grace, that *free* grace of thine, which has
 “ so long kept me out of hell, and daily gives me sweet foretastes of
 “ heaven. And now, Lord, let not readers of a Pharisaic turn mis-
 “ take what I have advanced in honour of the *works of faith*, and by
 “ that mean build themselves up in their self-righteous delusion, and
 “ destructive contempt of thy merits : help them to consider, that if
 “ our *works* are *rewardable*, it is because thy *free* grace makes them
 “ so ; thy Father having mercifully accepted our persons for thy
 “ sake, thy Holy Spirit having gently helped our infirmities, thy pre-
 “ cious blood having fully atoned for our sins and imperfections, thy
 “ incessant intercession still keeping the way to the throne of grace
 “ open for us, and our poor performances. Suffer not one of the
 “ sons of virtuous pride, into whose hands these sheets may fall, to
 “ forget that thou hast annexed the *reward of the inheritance* to the
 “ assemblage of the *works of faith*, or to *patient continuance in well*
 “ *doing*, and not to one or two splendid *works of hypocrisy*, done just
 “ to serve a worldly turn, or to bribe a disturbed clamorous con-
 “ science : and enable them so to feel the need of thy *pardon* for
 “ past transgressions, and of thy *power* for future obedience, that, as
 “ the chased hart panteth after the water-brooks, so their awakened
 “ souls may long after Christ, in whom the penitent find inexhaustible

“springs of righteousness and strength; and to whom with thee,
“and thy eternal Spirit, be for ever ascribed *praise, honour, and*
“*glory*, both in heaven and upon earth—PRAISE, for the wonders of
“*general redemption*, and for the innumerable displays of thy free
“grace unstained by free wrath—HONOUR, for bestowing the *gracious*
“*reward* of ■ heavenly salvation upon all believers, that make their
“election sure *by patient continuance in well DOING*—and GLORY for
“inflicting the *just punishment* of infernal damnation upon all that
“neglect so great salvation, and to the end of the accepted time dare
“thy vengeance *by obstinate continuance in ill DOING.*”

APPENDIX.

—00000—

Madeley, March 11, 1774.

YESTERDAY a friend lent me Mr. Baxter's *Confession of Faith*, printed in London 1655. The third part of this valuable book extends through above 140 large pages, and the title of that long section runs thus: *The testimony of reformed divines ascribing as much to WORKS as I: and many of them delivering the same doctrine.* He produces a hundred witnesses, some of whom are collective bodies, such as the *Assembly of Divines*, the compilers of the Homilies of the Church of England, and even the Synod of Dort. As the Antinomian spirit which flamed against Baxter's works in the last century, will probably sparkle against the preceding Essay, I beg leave to take shelter behind that great man, and a few of his numerous quotations. I shall cite only Baxter's page, to which I refer those who desire to see the original of his Latin quotations, together with the books, chapters, and pages of the various authors:

Page 322, he quotes the following words from Bishop Davenant,
 “ As no man *receiveth* that general justification which dischargeth from
 “ the guilt of all *foregoing* sins, but on the concurrence of repent-
 “ ance, faith, a purpose of a new life, and other actions of the same
 “ kind; so no man *retaineth* a state free from guilt in respect of *fol-*
 “ *lowing* sins, but by means of the same actions of believing in God,
 “ calling on God, mortifying the flesh, daily repenting and sorrowing
 “ for sins daily committed. The reason why all these are required
 “ on our part, is this: because these cannot be still absent, but their
 “ opposites will be present, which are contrary to the nature of a
 “ justified man.—As therefore to the conservation of natural life it is
 “ necessarily required, that a man carefully avoid fire, water, pre-
 “ cipices, poisons, and other things destructive to the health of the
 “ body; so to the conserving of spiritual life, it is necessarily
 “ required that a man avoid incredulity, impenitency, and other
 “ things that are destructive and contrary to the salvation of souls;
 “ which cannot be avoided unless the opposite and contrary actions

“be exercised. And these actions do not conserve the life of grace properly and of themselves, by touching the very effect of conservation ; but improperly and by accident, by excluding and removing the cause of destruction.”

Page 324, Baxter produces these words of the same pious Bishop, “We do therefore fight against, not the bare name of *merit*, in a harmless sense frequently used of old by the fathers, but the proud and false opinion of merit of *condignity*, brought lately by the Papists into the Church of God.”

And again, page 325, “The works of the regenerate have an ordination to the rewards of this life and that to come. 1. Because God hath freely promised (according to the good pleasure of his will) the rewards of this life and that to come, to the good works of the faithful and regenerate, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Gal. vi. 8. Matt. xx. 8.”

Page 328 he quotes the following passage from Dr. Twiss, “It lieth on all the elect to seek salvation, not only by faith, but by works also, in that without doubt salvation is to be given by way of reward, whereby God will reward not only our faith, but also all our good works.”

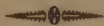
Page 330 and 331, he quotes Melancthon thus : “New obedience is necessary by necessity of order of the cause and effect, also by necessity of duty or command, also by necessity of retaining faith, and avoiding punishments temporal and eternal.—Cordatus stirreth up against me the city, and also the neighbour countries, and also the court itself, because in explaining the controversy of justification I said, that new obedience is necessary to salvation.”

Page 360, 361, he quotes these words of Zanchius : “Works are necessary : 1. To justify our faith [*coram Deo*] before God, &c. 2. They are necessary to the obtaining eternal life, &c. 3. They are necessary to inherit justification as CAUSES, &c. 4. They are profitable to conserve the increase of faith : also to PROMERIT of God, and obtain many good things both spiritual and corporal, both in this life and in another.” The words of Zanchius are, “*Opera utilia sunt, &c. ad multa bona tum spiritualia tum corporalia, tum in hac vita tum in alia a Deo PROMERENDA et obtinenda.*” Zanch. Tom. 8. p. 787. loc : de just. fidei. How much more tenderly did Mr. Wesley speak of *merit* than the orthodox Zanchius, whom Mr. Toplady has lately rendered famous among us ! I hope, that if this gentleman ever open his favourite book to the above-quoted page, he will drop his prejudices, and confess, that his dear Zanchius himself nobly contends for the Wesleyan “heresy.”

Page 462, Baxter concludes his book by praying for those, who had misrepresented him to the world, and obliged him to spend so much time in vindicating his doctrine. I most heartily join him in the last paragraph of his prayer, in which I beg the reader would join us both. "The Lord illuminate and send forth some messenger, that may acquaint the churches with that *true, middle, reconciling method of theological verities, which must be the mean of healing our divisions.* Let men be raised of greater sufficiency for this work, and of such blessed accomplishments as shall be fit to cope with the power of prejudice: and let the fury of blind contradiction be so calmed, that TRUTH may have opportunity to do its work."



AN
ESSAY ON TRUTH;
BEING A
RATIONAL VINDICATION
OF THE DOCTRINE OF
SALVATION BY FAITH.
WITH A
DEDICATORY EPISTLE
TO
THE RIGHT HON.
THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.



Without Faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. xi. 6.

Whatsoever is not of Faith is sin. Rom. xiv. 23.

Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. James ii. 17.

Good works spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith. XII. Art.

In Christ Jesus, &c. nothing availeth but faith, which worketh by love. Gal. v. 6.

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO THE

RIGHT HON. THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.



MY LADY,

BECAUSE I think it my duty to defend the *works of faith* against the triumphant errors of the Solifidians, some of your Ladyship's friends conclude, that I am an enemy to the doctrine of *salvation by faith*, and their conclusion amounts to such exclamations as these: How could a Lady, so zealous for God's glory and the Redeemer's grace, commit the superintendency of a seminary of pious learning to a man, that opposes the *fundamental* doctrine of Protestantism! How could she put her sheep under the care of such a wolf in sheep's clothing! This conclusion, my Lady, has grieved me for your sake; and to remove the blot that it indirectly fixes upon you, as well as to balance my Scriptural Essay on the Rewardableness of the Works of Faith, I publish, and humbly dedicate to your Ladyship, this piece of my *EQUAL CHECK* to *Pharisaism* and *Antinomianism*. May the kindness, which enabled you to bear for years with the coarseness of my ministrations, incline you favourably to receive this little token of my unfeigned attachment to Protestantism, and of my lasting respect for your Ladyship!

Your aversion to all that looks like controversy, can never make you think, that an *Equal Check* to the two grand delusions, which have crept into the church, is needless in our days. I flatter myself therefore, that though you may blame my *performance*, you will approve of my *design*. And indeed what true Christian can be absolutely neuter in this controversy? If God has a controversy with all *Pharisees* and *Antinomians*, have not all God's children a controversy with *Pharisaism* and *Antinomianism*? Have you not for one, my Lady? Do you not check in private, what I attempt to check in public? Does not

the religious world know that you abhor, attack, and pursue *Pharisaism* in its most artful disguises? And have I not frequently heard you express in the strongest terms your detestation of *Antinomianism*, and lament the number of sleeping professors whom that Delilah robs of their strength? Nor would you, I am persuaded, my Lady, have countenanced the opposition which was made against the Minutes, if your commendable, though (as it appears to me) at that time too precipitate zeal against *Pharisaism*, had not prevented your seeing, that they contain the scripture truths, which are most fit to stop the rapid progress of *Antinomianism*.

However, if you still think, my Lady, that I mistake with respect to the importance of those propositions; you know, I am not mistaken, when I declare before the world, that a *powerful, practical, actually saving* faith, is the only faith I ever heard your Ladyship recommend as worthy to be contended for. And so long as you plead only for such a faith; so long as you abhor the winter-faith that saves the Solifidians in their own conceit, while they commit adultery, murder, and incest, if they choose to carry Antinomianism to such a dreadful length; so long as you are afraid to maintain, either directly or indirectly, that the *evidence* and *comfort* of justifying faith may indeed be suspended by sin; but that the *righteousness* of faith, and the *justification* which it instrumentally procures, can never be lost, no not by the most enormous and complicated crimes; whatever diversity there may be between your Ladyship's sentiments and mine, it can never be fundamental. I preach salvation by a faith, that *actually* works by obedient love: and your Ladyship witnesses salvation by an *actually* operative faith: nor can I, to this day, see any material difference between those phrases: for if I profess a faith that is *actually* operative, I cannot with propriety find fault with a faith that *actually* operates: I cannot with decency sacrifice its works to "Antinomian dotages."*

Permit me also to observe, that the grand questions debated between my opponents and me, are not (as I fear your Ladyship apprehends) whether Pharisaic merit shall eclipse the Redeemer's worthiness; or, whether the doctrine of salvation by a *lively* faith shall be given up to mere moralists: I no more plead either for the one or the other, than I do for placing the Pretender upon the British throne, and for sacrificing the great charter to arbitrary power. No, my Lady—What we contend about is: 1. Whether Christ's *law* is not perfectly consistent with his *blood*: 2. Whether we are to set him at nought as

* The name which Flavel gives to Dr. Crisp's modish tenets.

a PROPHEt, a KING, and a JUDGE ; under pretence of exalting him as a PRIEST, an ADVOCATE, and a SURETY of the *better covenant*, that threatens fallen believers with a *sorer punishment* than that which was inflicted upon the despisers of the Mosaic covenant : 3. Whether the evangelical *worthiness*, which a true believer *really* derives from Christ, is not absolutely necessary to salvation : 4. Whether such a *worthiness* is not as consistent with Christ's original and paramount merit, as the light that shines in your apartment is consistent with the original and transcendent brightness of the sun : 5. Whether that faith is *living*, which evidences itself by gross immoralities : 6. Whether it is not rather the "*dead faith*" that St. James exclaims against : And 7. Whether the Solifidians do not set up the *abomination of desolation in the holy place*, when they directly or INDIRECTLY* teach, that all believers may go any length in sin without losing their heavenly thrones, or the divine favour : that a man may have the justifying, saving, operative faith, which your Ladyship pleads for, while he adds idolatry to incontinence, murder to adultery, and curses to the repeated denial of Jesus Christ : that fallen believers, who have returned to their sins as a *sow that is washed does to her wallowing in the mire*, stand immaculate before God in a robe of imputed righteousness, even while they *turn God's grace into lasciviousness, and commit all uncleanness with greediness* : that they shall all infallibly sing in heaven, in consequence of their most grievous falls on earth ; and that a kind of hypocritical, lying free grace, is to be preached to all sinners, which *necessarily* shuts up most of them under the absolute free wrath of a God ever merciless towards the majority of mankind.

Now, my Lady, as I am persuaded that you do not admire such an *immoral* and *narrow* Gospel ; as I believe, that if at any time it creeps into your chapels, it is without your approbation, under the mask of decency, and only by the means of the specious phrases of *free Gospel, electing, everlasting love, finished salvation, and free, distinguishing grace*, which, according to the analogy of the modish faith, SWEETLY make way for the inseparable and BITTER doctrines of a *confined Gospel, of everlasting hate, reprobating unmercifulness, finished damnation, and free, distinguishing wrath* ; and as I do your Ladyship the justice to acknowledge, that your most earnest desire is to support what appears to you a *free and holy Gospel* at the expense of your fortune, life, and character ; I beg, my Lady, you will also

* Mr. Hill has done it *directly* in the fourth of the Five Letters which he has inscribed to me, and all the Solifidians do it *indirectly*.

do me the justice to believe, that if I oppose the Solifidian Gospel of the day, it is only because it appears to me a *confined* and *unholy* Gospel, calculated to foster the Antinomianism of Laodicean believers, and to render Christ's undefiled religion *contemptible* to the RATIONAL, and *execrable* to the MORAL world. If you grant me this request, I shall only trouble you with one more, which is to believe, that, notwithstanding the part I have taken in the present controversy, I remain with my former respect and devotedness,

My Lady,

Your Ladyship's

Most obliged and obedient

Servant in the Gospel,

J. FLETCHER.

Madeley, March 12, 1774.

ESSAY ON TRUTH, &c.

INTRODUCTION

EXCEEDINGLY sorry should I be, if the testimony which I have borne to the necessity of *good* works, caused any of my readers to do the worst of *bad* works, that is, to neglect *believing*, and to depend upon some of the external, *faithless* performances, which conceited Pharisees call “good works;” and by which they absurdly think to make amends for their sins, to purchase the Divine favour, to set aside God’s mercy, and to supersede Christ’s atoning blood. Therefore, lest some unwary souls, going from one extreme to the other, should so unfortunately avoid Antinomianism, as to run upon the rocks which are rendered famous by the destruction of the Pharisees, I shall *once more* vindicate the fundamental, anti-pharisaic doctrine of *salvation by faith*: I say *once more*, because I have already done it in my guarded Sermon. And to the Scriptures, Articles, and Arguments produced in that piece, I shall now add *rational*, and yet *scriptural* observations, which, together with appeals to matter of fact, will, I hope, soften the prejudices of judicious moralists against the doctrine of faith, and reconcile considerate Solifidians to the doctrine of works. In order to this, I design in general to prove, that true faith is the only plant which can possibly bear good works; that it loses its operative nature, and dies when it produces them not; and that it as much surpasses good works in importance, as the motion of the heart does all other bodily motions. Inquire we first into the nature and ground of saving faith.

SECTION I.

A plain definition of Saving Faith, how believing is the gift of God, and whether it is in our power to believe.

WHAT is Faith? It is *believing heartily*.—What is *saving* faith? I dare not say that it is “believing heartily, my sins are forgiven me

for Christ's sake ;" for if I live in sin, that belief is a *destructive* conceit, and not *saving* faith. Neither dare I say, that "saving faith is *only* a sure trust and confidence, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me ;"* for, if I did, I should damn almost all mankind for 4000 years. Such definitions of saving faith are, I fear, too *narrow* to be just, and too *unguarded* to keep out Solifidianism. A comparison may convince my readers of it. If they desired me to define *man*, and I said, "*Man* is a rational animal that lives in France in the year 1774 ;" would they not ask me, whether I suppose, all the rational animals, that lived on this side the English Channel in 1773, were *brutes* ? And if you desired to know what I mean by *saving* faith, and I replied, It is a supernatural belief, that Christ has actually atoned for my sins upon the cross ; would you not ask me, whether Abraham, the father of the faithful, who would have believed a lie if he had believed this, had only *damning* faith ?

To avoid therefore such mistakes ; to contradict no scriptures ; to put no black mark of DAMNATION upon any man, that in any nation *fears God and works righteousness* ; to leave no room for Solifidianism ; and to present the reader with a definition of faith adequate to the *everlasting Gospel*, I would choose to say, that "justifying or saving faith is *believing* the saving truth with the heart unto internal, and (as we have opportunity) unto external *righteousness*, according to our light and dispensation." To St. Paul's words, Rom. x. 10. I add the epithets *internal* and *external*, in order to exclude, according to 1 John iii. 7, 8. the filthy imputation, under which fallen believers may, if we credit the Antinomians, commit internal and external adultery, mental and bodily murder, without the least reasonable fear of endangering their faith, their interest in God's favour, and their inamissible title to a throne of glory.

But, "How is faith the gift of God ?"—Some persons think, that faith is as much out of our power, as the lightning that shoots from a distant cloud : they suppose, that God drives sinners to the fountain of Christ's blood, as irresistibly as the infernal *Legion* drove the herd of swine into the sea of Galilee ; and that a man is as passive in the first act of faith, as Jonah was in the act of the fish, which cast him upon the shore. Hence, the *absurd* plea of many, who lay fast hold

* When the Church of England and Mr. Wesley give us particular definitions of faith, it is plain, that they consider it according to the *Christian* dispensation ; the privileges of which must be principally insisted upon among Christians ; and that our Church and Mr. Wesley guard faith against Antinomianism, is evident from their maintaining, as well as St. Paul, that by bad works we lose a good conscience, and *make shipwreck of the faith*.

on the horns of the devil's altar, UNBELIEF, and cry out, "We can no more believe than we can make a world."

I call this an *absurd* plea for several reasons : 1. It supposes, that when God commands all men every where to repent, and to believe the Gospel, he commands them to do what is as impossible to them as the making of a new world.—2. It supposes, that the terms of the covenant of *grace* are much harder than the terms of the covenant of *works*. For the old covenant required only perfect human obedience : but the new covenant requires of us the work of an Almighty God, i. e. *believing* ; a work this, which, upon the scheme I oppose, is as impossible to us as the creation of a world, in which we can never have a hand.—3. It supposes, that the promise of salvation being suspended upon *believing*, a thing as impracticable to us as the making of a new world, we shall as infallibly be damned, if God do not believe for us, as we should be, if we were required to make a world on pain of damnation, and God would not make it in our place.—4. It supposes, that believing is a work which belongs to God alone : for no man in his senses can doubt but *creating a world*, or its tantamount, *believing*, is a work which none but God can manage.—5. It supposes, that (if he, who *believeth not the divine record*, makes God a liar, and shall be damned) whenever unbelievers are called upon to believe, and God refuses them the power to do it, he as much forces them to make him a liar and to be damned, as the king would force me to give him the lie, and to be hanged, if he put me in circumstances where I could have no chance of avoiding that crime and punishment, but by submitting to the alternative of creating a world.—6. It supposes, that when Christ *marvelled at the unbelief* of the Jews, he showed as little wisdom as I should, were I to marvel at a man for not creating three worlds as quickly as a believer can say the three creeds.—7. That when Christ *reproved* his disciples for their unbelief, he acted more unreasonably, than if he had rebuked them for not adding a new star to every constellation in heaven.—8. That to exhort people to *continue in the faith*, is to exhort them to something as difficult, as to continue creating worlds.—And lastly, that when Christ fixes our damnation upon *unbelief*, (see Mark xvi. 16. and John iii. 18.) he acts far more tyrannically than the king would do, if he issued out a proclamation informing all his subjects, that whosoever shall not, by such a time, raise a new island within the British seas, shall be infallibly put to the most painful and lingering death.

Having thus exposed the erroneous sense, in which some people suppose that *faith is the gift of God* ; I beg leave to mention in what

sense it appears to me to be so. *Believing* is the gift of God's grace, as *cultivating* the root of a rare flower given you, or *raising* a crop of corn in your field, is the gift of God's providence.—*Believing* is the gift of the God of GRACE, as *breathing*, *moving*, and *eating*, are the gifts of the God of NATURE. He gives me lungs and air, that I may breathe ; he gives me life and muscles, that I may move ; he bestows upon me food and a mouth, that I may eat ; and when I have no stomach, he gives me common sense to see, I must die or force myself to take some nourishment or some medicine : but he neither *breathes*, *moves*, nor *eats* for me ; nay, when I think proper, I can accelerate my breathing, motion, and eating ; and if I please, I may even *fast*, *lie down*, or *hang myself*, and by that mean put an end to my *eating*, *moving*, and *breathing*.—Once more, *Faith* is the gift of God to believers, as *sight* is to you. The Parent of good freely gives you the light of the sun, and organs proper to receive it : he places you in a world where that light visits you daily : he apprizes you, that sight is conducive to your safety, pleasure, and profit : and every thing around you bids you use your eyes and see : nevertheless you may not only drop your curtains, and extinguish your candle, but close your eyes also. This is exactly the case with regard to faith. Free grace removes (in part) the total blindness, which Adam's fall brought upon us : free grace gently sends us some beams of truth, which is the light of the *Sun of righteousness* ; it disposes the eyes of our understanding to see those beams ; it excites us various ways to welcome them ; it blesses us with many, perhaps with all the means of faith, such as opportunities to hear, read, inquire ; and power to consider, assent, consent, resolve, and reresolve to believe the truth. But, after all, *believing* is as much our own act as *seeing*. We may, nay, in general do, suspend, or omit the *act* of faith ; especially when that act is not yet become *habitual*, and when the glaring light, that *sometimes* accompanies the revelation of the truth, is abated. Nay, we may imitate Pharaoh, Judas, and all reprobrates : we may do by the eye of our faith, what some report that Democritus did by his bodily eyes. Being tired of seeing the follies of mankind, to rid himself of that disagreeable sight he put his eyes out. We may be so averse from the *light*, which *lightens every man that comes into the world* ; we may so dread it because our works are evil, as to exemplify, like the Pharisees, such awful declarations as these : *Their eyes have they closed, lest they should see, &c.*—Wherefore God gave them up to a reprobate mind, and they were blinded.

When St. Paul says, that Christians *believe according to the working of God's mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him*

from the dead; he chiefly alludes to the resurrection of Christ, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost; the former of these wonders being the great ground and object of the *Christian* faith, and the latter displaying the great privilege of the *Christian* dispensation. To suppose therefore, that nobody savingly believes, who does not believe according to an *actual*, overwhelming display of God's almighty power, is as unscriptural as to maintain that God's people no longer believe, than he actually repeats the wonders of Easter-day, and of the day of Pentecost. Is it not clear, that the apostle had no such notions when he wrote to the Corinthians? *I declare unto you the Gospel, which I preached unto you, which you have received, wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory—(if ye hold fast, as the original means) what I preached unto you, unless ye have BELIEVED in vain. For I declared unto you, &c. that Christ died for our sins, that he was buried, and that he rose again according to the Scriptures, &c. so we preach, and so ye believed.* Again, how plain is the account, that our Lord and his forerunner give us of faith and unbelief! *Verily we speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen, and ye receive not our witness—What he (Christ) hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man (comparatively) receiveth his testimony; but he that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true.*

Two things have chiefly given room to our mistakes respecting the *strange impossibility* of believing. The *first* is, our confounding the truths which characterize the several Gospel dispensations. We see, for example, that a poor besotted drunkard, an over-reaching greedy tradesman, a rich sceptical epicure, and a proud ambitious courtier, have no more taste for the *Gospel of Christ*, than a horse and a mule have for the high-seasoned dishes that crown a royal table. An immense gulf is fixed between them and the *Christian* faith. In their present state they can no more believe *with their heart unto righteousness in Christ*, than an unborn infant can become a man without passing through infancy and youth. But, although they cannot yet believe savingly *in Christ*, may they not believe *in God* according to the import of our Lord's words, *Ye believe IN GOD, believe also IN ME?* If the *Pharisees* COULD NOT believe IN CHRIST, it was not because God never gave them a power equal to that which created the world; but, because they were practical Atheists, who actually rejected the *morning light* of the *Jewish* dispensation, and by that mean absolutely unfitted themselves for the *meridian light* of the *Christian* dispensation. This is evident from our Lord's own words: *I know you, that ye have not the love of God, or a regard for God, in you. I come in*

my Father's name, and ye receive me not, though you might do it; for, if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can YE BELIEVE, who receive honour one of another? &c. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For, had ye believed MOSES, and submitted to his dispensation, ye would have believed ME, and submitted to my Gospel. But if ye believe not HIS WRITINGS, how shall ye believe MY WORDS?

The *second* cause of our mistake about the impossibility of *believing now*, is the confounding of faith with its fruits and rewards: which naturally leads us to think, that we cannot believe, or that our faith is vain, till those rewards and fruits appear. But is not this being ingenious to make the worst of things? Had Abraham no faith in God's promise, till Isaac was born? Was Sarah a damnable unbeliever, till she felt the long-expected fruit of her womb stir there? Had the woman of Canaan no faith till our Lord granted her request, and cried out, *O woman, great is thy faith, let it be done unto thee even as thou wilt?* Was the centurion an infidel, till Christ *marvelled at his faith*, and declared *he had not found such faith, no not in Israel?* Was Peter faithless, till his Master said, *Blessed art thou, Simon bar Jonah?* &c. Did the weeping penitent begin to believe only when Christ said to her, *Go in peace, thy faith hath saved thee?* And had the apostles no faith in *the promise of the Father*, till their heads were actually crowned with celestial fire? Should we not distinguish between *OUR sealing the truth of our dispensation* with the seal of our faith, according to our present light and ability; and *God's sealing the truth of our faith* with the seal of his power, or actually rewarding us by the grant of some eminent and uncommon blessing?—To believe is *OUR part*; to make *signs follow them that believe* is *God's part*; and because we can no more do *God's part* than we can make a world, is it agreeable either to Scripture or reason to conclude, that doing *OUR part* is equally difficult? Can you find one single instance in the Scriptures of a soul willing to believe, and absolutely unable to do it? From these two scriptures, *Lord, increase our faith:—Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief*, can you justly infer, that the praying disciples and the distressed father had no power to believe? Do not their words evidence just the contrary? That we cannot believe, any more than we can eat, without the help and power of God, is what we are all agreed upon; but, does this in the least prove, that the help and power, by which we believe, is as far out of the reach of willing souls, as the help and power to make a world?

Such scriptures as these, *Unto you it is given to believe—A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from above—No man can come unto me except the Father draw him—Every good gift, and of course that of faith, cometh from the Father of lights.*—Such scriptures, I say, secure indeed the honour of free grace, but do not destroy the power of free agency. To us, that freely believe in a holy, righteous God, it is given freely to believe in a gracious bleeding Saviour; because the sick alone have need of a physician; and none but those who believe in God can see the need of an ADVOCATE with him. But ought we from hence to conclude, that our unbelieving neighbours are necessarily debarred from believing in God? When our Lord said to the unbelieving Jews, that they COULD NOT believe in him, did he not speak of a moral impotency—an impotency of their own making? I ask it again, If they obstinately resisted the light of their inferior dispensation; if they were none of Christ's Jewish sheep, how could they be his Christian sheep? If an obstinate boy sets himself against learning the letters, how can he ever learn to read? If a stubborn Jew stiffly opposes the law of Moses, how can he submit to the law of Christ? Is it not strange that some good people should leap into reprobation, rather than admit so obvious a solution of this little difficulty!

From the above-mentioned texts we have then no more reason to infer, that God forces believers to believe, or that he believes for them, than to conclude that God constrains diligent tradesmen to get money, or gets it for them, because it is said, *We are not sufficient to THINK ANY thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God—WHO GIVES US ALL things richly to enjoy.—Remember the Lord thy God, for it is HE that GIVETH THEE power to get wealth.*

From the whole I conclude, that so long as the *accepted time* and the *day of salvation* continue, all sinners, who have not yet finally hardened themselves, may day and night (through the help and power of the general light of Christ's *saving grace*, mentioned John i. 9. and Tit. ii. 11.) receive some truth belonging to the *everlasting Gospel*; though it should be only this: "There is a God, who will call us to an account for our sins, and who spares us to break them off by repentance." And their cordial believing of this truth would make way for their receiving the higher truths, that stand between them and the top of the mysterious ladder of truth. I grant, it is impossible they should leap at once to the middle, much less to the highest round of that ladder: but if the foot of it is upon earth, in the very nature of things, the lowest step is within their reach, and by laying hold on it, they may go on from faith to faith, till they

stand firm even in the *Christian* faith ; if distinguishing grace has elected them to hear the *Christian* Gospel. The most sudden conversions imply this gradual transition. As in the very nature of things, when *the Spirit of the Lord* caught away Philip from the Eunuch, and transported him to Azotus, he made Philip's body rapidly measure *all* the distance between the wilderness of Gaza and Azotus : so, when he helped the Philippian jailer from the gates of hell to the gates of heaven in one night, he made him rapidly pass through the fear of God, the dread of his justice, and the pangs of penitential desires after salvation, before he entered into the joyous rest, that remains for those that heartily believe in Christ. Nor is this quick, though gradual, transition from midnight darkness to noonday light, an unintelligible mystery ; since we are witnesses of a similar event every revolving day. The vegetable and the animal world help us likewise to understand the nature of sudden conversions. Every philosopher knows, that a mushroom passes through almost as many stages of the vegetative life in six hours, as an oak does in two hundred years : and those animalcula that frisk into life in the morning of a summer's day, propagate their species at noon, are old at four o'clock, and dead at six, measure the length of animal life as really as Methuselah did in his millennium.

SECTION II.

Saving Truth is the object of Saving Faith : what Truth is, and what great things are spoken of it. Our salvation turns upon it.

It appears by the preceding section, that *saving* TRUTH is the ground and object of *saving* FAITH : but "What is TRUTH?"—This is the awful question that Pilate once asked of him who was best able to answer it. But alas ! Pilate was in such haste through the lying fear of man, that he did not stay for an answer. May I venture to give one.—TRUTH is spiritual *substance* ; and a LIE, spiritual *shadow*. TRUTH is spiritual *light* ; and a LIE, spiritual *darkness*. TRUTH is the root of all *virtue*, and a LIE is the root of all *vice*. TRUTH is the celestial tincture, that makes spirits good ; and a LIE, the infernal tincture that makes them evil. A LIE is nearly related to the devil, as infection to one that has the plague, or opacity to the earth : and TRUTH is as nearly related to God, as fragrancy to burning incense, and light to the unclouded sun.

According to this definition of TRUTH and ERROR, may we not give plain and scriptural answers to some of the deepest questions in the

world? What is God? The reverse of the prince of darkness, and of the father of lies: He is the Father of lights, and the God of Truth: He is Light, and in him is no darkness at all.—What is Christ? He is the brightness of his Father's glory; a light: a great light to them that dwell in the shadow of death. He is the TRUTH; the TRUE Witness; the TRUTH ITSELF; Emmanuel, God with us, full of grace and TRUTH.—What is the Holy Ghost? The Spirit of TRUTH: Yea, says St. John, The Spirit is TRUTH, and leads into all TRUTH.—What is Satan? The Spirit of ERROR, that abode not in the TRUTH; in whom there is no TRUTH, and who deceives the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth.

Again, What is the Gospel? The word of TRUTH, the word of God, the word of faith, the word of the kingdom, the word of life, and the word of salvation.—What are Gospel ministers? Men that bear witness to the TRUTH; that rightly divide the word of TRUTH; that are fellow-helpers to the TRUTH; that speak forth the words of TRUTH; and are valiant for the TRUTH upon the earth.—What is the preaching of the Gospel? The manifestation of the TRUTH.—What is it to believe the Gospel? It is to receive the KNOWLEDGE of the TRUTH; to receive the LOVE of the TRUTH; and to obey the TRUTH.—What is it to mistake the Gospel? It is to err from the TRUTH; to turn after fables; and to give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.—What is the Church? The pillar and ground of TRUTH, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.—What is the first fruit of sincere repentance? The acknowledging of the TRUTH.—What are believers? Persons that are chosen to salvation through the unnecessitated belief of the TRUTH; that are of the TRUTH; that know the TRUTH; that have the TRUTH in their inward parts; that have a good report of the TRUTH; in whom dwells the TRUTH; who have been taught the TRUTH as it is in Jesus; in whom is the TRUTH of Christ; who have purified their souls by obeying the TRUTH; and walk in the TRUTH.—What are unstable souls? People ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the TRUTH, with whom the TRUTH of the Gospel does not continue, and who are wilfully bewitched, that they should not obey the TRUTH.—What are obstinate unbelievers? Men of corrupt minds, destitute of the TRUTH; unreasonable men, that resist the TRUTH; that glory and lie against the TRUTH; that walk in darkness, and do not the TRUTH.—What are apostates? Men that sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the TRUTH, and, instead of repenting, count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing.—What are perfect men in Christ? Men that are established in the present TRUTH, i. e. in the TRUTH revealed under the Christian

dispensation, and that *can do nothing against the TRUTH, but for the TRUTH.*

If all turns thus upon TRUTH, and if TRUTH is at once spiritual light, and the object of saving faith, it follows : 1. That to walk in the TRUTH, to walk in the LIGHT, and to walk by FAITH, are phrases of the same import. 2. That to be converted is to be turned from darkness to LIGHT, that is, from the practical belief of a lie to the practical belief of the TRUTH ; or, as St. Paul expresses it, *from the power of Satan unto God* : And 3. That the chief business of the tempter, is to take the word of truth out of our hearts, lest we should believe and be saved : or, in other terms, to blind our minds, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto us.

If Jesus Christ is the Truth, the Light, the Life, and the WORD, that was in the beginning with God, and was God ; the WORD, by which all things were made, and are preserved—If he is the Light that shineth in darkness, even when the darkness comprehendeth it not—If he is the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, while the day of salvation lasts—If he is the archetype, the eternal, living pattern of all saving truth—If he is the essential, almighty WORD, from whom revealed Truth, and the Word of our salvation, flow as constantly as light and heat from the sun ; do we not slight him, and despise eternal life, when we slight the TRUTH, and despise the WORD ? And may not the great things spoken of the Word confirm what has been said of the Truth, and help us to answer the questions already proposed in a manner equally Scriptural and conclusive ?

Not forgetting that there is such a thing as the Word nigh, the Word behind us, the still small voice, and the word of that grace, which has appeared unto all men, teaching them to deny worldly lusts, and to live soberly, &c. I ask, What are evangelists ? Men, who bear record of the WORD of God, and bear witness of the LIGHT, that all men may believe : sowers that sow the WORD of the kingdom ; holding forth the WORD of life. What are false apostles ? Men that corrupt the WORD of God, that handle the WORD of God deceitfully, and preach another Gospel ; whose WORDS eat as does a canker.—What are believers ? People that hear the WORD of God and keep it ; that are begotten of God by the WORD of Truth ; that are born again by the WORD of God ; that hear the SAYINGS of Christ, and do them ; in whose hearts the WORD of Christ dwells richly ; who receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the WORD of God, which worketh effectually in them that believe it : they are persons that receive with meekness the engrafted WORD ; which is able to save their souls ; that have tasted the good WORD of God ; that desire the sincere milk of the WORD, that they may

grow thereby : that gladly receive the WORD ; have God's WORD abiding in them ; are made clean through the WORD, which Christ speaks, by his ministers, his Scriptures, his Spirit, his works, or his rod ; and in whom the seed of that WORD produces thirty-fold, sixty-fold, or a hundred-fold, according to their light, faithfulness, and opportunity.

Again, What are unbelievers ? Antinomian hypocrites that hear the SAYINGS of Christ, and do them not ; or Pharisaic despisers that stumble at the WORD, speak against those things which are spoken by God's messengers ; contradicting and blaspheming ; and who, by putting the WORD of God from them, judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.—What are martyrs ? Witnesses of the truth, slain for the WORD of God, —And what are apostates ? Persons in whom the WORD is choaked by the cares of this world, or the deceitfulness of riches ; who fall away when persecution ariseth because of the WORD ; by reason of whom the way of TRUTH is evil spoken of ; and in whom the seed of the WORD becometh unfruitful—Thus all turns still upon TRUTH and the WORD of God.

SECTION III.

That according to Reason and Scripture, there is a saving almighty power in Truth, and the Word of God.

SHOULD the Reader ask here, how it is possible, the WORD and the TRUTH should be so nearly related to our Saviour, that to receive them is to receive Him, and to reject them is to reject Him, and his salvation : I answer, that in the spiritual, as well as in the political and mercantile world, signs are necessary by which to convey our thoughts and resolutions. Hence the use of Letters, Notes, Bonds, and Charters ; of Revelations, Traditions, Scriptures, and Sacraments. Now an honest man's word is as good as his bond or pledge, and as true as his heart ; his word or bond being nothing but his mind or determination fairly conveyed to others by the means of his tongue or of his hand. Therefore, in the very nature of things, to receive the Word of Christ, is to receive Christ, who dwells in our hearts BY FAITH ; whom believers know now after the flesh no more ; who commissioned his favourite apostle to say, *He that abideth in the DOCTRINE of Christ hath both the Father and the Son ;* and who personally declares, *My mother and my brothers are these, that hear the WORD of God and keep it.*

As the legislative power has appointed, that pure gold duly stamped, and Bank-notes properly drawn up, shall represent the value,

and procure the possession of all the necessities and conveniences of life, which can be bought with money ; so our heavenly Lawgiver has fixed that the *Word of Truth* shall answer in his spiritual kingdom, the end of *gold and letters of exchange* in the kingdoms of this world : and this spiritual gold, this *Word tried to the uttermost*, he offers to all that are *poor, and blind, and naked, that they may be rich in faith*. “*I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.*”

Again : as a *Will* conveys an immense fortune ; and a *Death-warrant* a capital punishment : so does the *Word of God* convey the *unsearchable riches of Christ* to obedient believers, and the dreadful punishments of the damned to obstinate unbelievers. I readily grant that a *Bank-note* is NOT *gold*, that a *Will* is NOT an *estate*, and that a *Death-warrant* is NOT the *gallows* : nevertheless, so strong is the connexion between those seemingly insignificant *signs*, and the important *things* which they signify, that none but fools will throw away their bank-notes, or the wills of their friends, as waste-paper ; none but madmen will sport with their death-warrant as with a play-bill. Now if the written *word* of men, who, through forgetfulness, fickleness, impotence, or unfaithfulness, often break their engagements, can nevertheless have such force ; how excessively foolhardy are sinners, that disregard the *WORD* of the King of kings, *who cannot lie* ! the proclamations of the *God of Truth, with whom NO WORD is impossible* ! the promises and threatenings, the will and testament of the Almighty, who says, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but MY WORD shall not pass away* !

Once more : Although *no man knows the Father immediately but the Son*, yet the Father may be immediately known by his *Works*, his *Word*, and his *Son*. For, leaving room for the liberty of moral agents and their works, God's *Works* are always as his *Word*. Hence we read, *God SAID, Let there be light, and there was light* : *Cursed be the ground for man's sake, and the ground was cursed* : *For he SPAKE, and it was DONE* ; he *COMMANDED, and it STOOD FAST*. As God's *Works* are the *express image of his Word* uttered without,—of his *out-going Word* (if I may so speak :) so his *out-going Word* is the *express image of his immanent, essential Word*, which is his eternal mind, and which the Scriptures call indifferently, *the Word, the Wisdom, the Son of God, or the express Image of his Father's glory*. Hence it appears, that as the essential Word, Christ, is one with the Father ; so the word of Saving Truth is one with the Son : and that David, Solomon, and St. Paul, spoke noble truths when they said : “*Whoso despiseth the WORD shall be destroyed—By the WORD of thy lips I have kept me from the ways of the destroyer.—The Law, or Word of the Lord*

is an undefiled Word: it is sure and giveth wisdom to the simple: it is right and rejoiceth the heart, it is pure and giveth light: it is true and righteous altogether; more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold;—better to me than thousands of gold and silver;—sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb:—It is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path: by it is thy servant taught and made wise to salvation; and in keeping of it there is great reward, even the reward of the inheritance," a kingdom of grace here, and a kingdom of glory hereafter.

But let our Lord himself be heard, and he will join *himself* in mystic trinity to the *Word*, and to the *Truth* of God. He promiscuously uses the expressions *Truth* and *Word*, which make the burden of the last section. When he recommends his disciples to his Father, he says, *Sanctify them through thy TRUTH, thy WORD is TRUTH*. Hence it appears, that the *Truth* and the *Word* are terms of the same import; that the *Word of Truth* is a sanctifying emanation from God, and the ordinary vehicle of the divine power; and that our Lord uttered a rational mystery when he said, *He that receiveth you (the witnesses of my Truth and the sowers of MY WORD) receiveth me: and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me*. But, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of ME and of MY WORDS, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father*. And imperfect believers he encouraged thus: *If ye continue in my WORD, &c. ye shall know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH shall make you free, &c. If the SON shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*.—Important scriptures these, which show the connexion of the *TRUTH* with the *SON of God*! Blessed scriptures, which St. Paul sums up in the following words! *Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring CHRIST down from above) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up CHRIST again from the dead.) But what saith the righteousness which is of faith? The WORD is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the WORD of faith which we preach*.

Nor is this doctrine of the apostle contrary to what he says on another occasion: *The kingdom of God is not in WORD, but in POWER*, i. e. true religion does not consist in fine talking, but in powerful believing and holy living: for what is more powerful than *Truth*? "*Truth is great, and will prevail*:" *Truth* is the strongest thing in the world: it overturns the thrones of tyrants, and supports God's everlasting throne.

Again, the word of man brings strange things to pass. Let but a general speak, and an army of Russians marches up through clouds of smoke, flames of fire, and volleys of iron balls, to form heaps of

dead or dying bodies before the intrenchments of the Turks. An admiral gives the *word* of command, it may be only by hoisting a flag; and a fleet is under sail; artificial clouds and thunders are formed over the sea: the billows seem to be mingled with fire; and the king of terrors flies from deck to deck in his most dreadful and bloody forms.

If such is the power of the *word* of a man, who is but a worm; how almighty must be the *word* of God! By the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made, saith David: *The worlds were framed by the word of God*, adds St. Paul, and *he upholdeth all things by the word of his power*. That word, no NECESSARY agents can resist. It rolls the planets with as much ease as hurricanes whirl the dust. If FREE agents can resist his *word* of COMMAND, it is only because he *permits* it for their trial. But, wo to them that resist it to the end of their day of probation: for they shall feel the RESISTLESS force of his *word* of PUNISHMENT: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*. And who is the god that shall break the adamantine, infernal chains, which that dreadful *word* will rivet upon them?

We read in the Gospel, that our Lord *marvelled* at the centurion's faith as greater faith than he had found in Israel. But wherein consisted the peculiar greatness of that man's faith? Is it not evident from the context, that it was in the noble and lively apprehension, which he had of the force and energy of Christ's word, Lord, said he, *I am a man under the authority of my colonel and general, and yet having soldiers under me, I say to one, Go; and he goeth: and to another, Come; and he cometh, &c.* Now, Lord, if MY word has such power, what cannot THINE do? *Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.*

Why is Abraham called *The father of the faithful*? Is it not because judging him faithful and almighty that had PROMISED, against hope he believed in hope, that he should become the father of many nations; according to that which was SPOKEN: *So shall thy seed be*? Is it not because he staggered not at the promise, or word of God, through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform; and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness? And shall not the like faith be imputed to us also, if we believe the saving truth revealed, or the divine record given under the present dispensation of the Gospel: viz. that God raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification?

Oh! who can describe the needless perplexities of those wilful unbelievers, that have the truth of their dispensation clearly brought

to them, and yet, like Thomas, resolutely set themselves against it, saying, *I will not believe?* And who can enumerate the blessings which those childlike souls inherit, who, instead of quarrelling with, cordially embrace, the word of God, and set to their seal that God is true! They seal God's truth, and God seals their hearts: *Their faith is imputed to them for righteousness; their faith saves them; it is done to them according to their faith; the God of hope fills them with all JOY and PEACE in believing.* Thus, through faith, they not only subdue the kingdom of darkness, but inherit the present kingdom of God, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, received by the hearing of faith. Well-disposed reader, if thou doubtst the truth of those scriptures, try it by believing now what appears to thee to be the saving truth of thy dispensation: believe it with all thy present might, be it little or be it much; and if, in a little time thou dost not find thyself more settled and free, more able to fight against sin and to take up thy cross, let me bear the blame for ever.

Did the success of God's word depend *only* upon him, the truth would always operate in a saving manner. If men were not to *work out their own salvation*, by freely repenting, believing, and obeying, with the power *to will and to do*, which God gives them of his good pleasure; all mankind would repent, believe, and obey, as passively as clocks go, and as regularly as the sun rises. But, we are *moral agents*; and works *morally* good depend as much upon the concurrence of God's free grace, and of our free obedience of faith, as the birth of the Prince of Wales did upon the marriage of the King and Queen. Hence we read, *To whom sware he, that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? For the WORD preached did not profit them, not because the seed was bad, or because they had no power to receive it; but, because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it.*—Wherefore, says the apostle, *to-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, &c. Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of UNBELIEF, &c. and Exhort one another daily to believe.*

The genuine seed of the word is then always good, always full of divine energy. If it does not spring up, or if after it has sprung up, it does not *bring forth fruit to perfection*, it is entirely the fault of the ground. *The words that I speak*, says our Lord, *though it should be only by the mouth of my servants, they are spirit and they are life to BELIEVING hearts.* For Christ gave himself for the Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the WORD:—IF it continue in the faith:—holding fast the faithful WORD:—the WORD of the truth of the Gospel, which is come in all the world, and

bringeth forth fruit since the day it is heard in faith ; it being the grand office of the Spirit, to make the word of God, when it is mixed with faith on our part, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and to the discerning and destroying of the bad thoughts and intents of the heart.

Nothing, therefore, can be more certain than the connexion between the power of God and the Truth of the Gospel.—“ TRUTH (says a divine of the last century) is that eternal word of the Father, which, in the Son, by the Holy Ghost, is revealed to us, to be our guide back again to that bosom, whence it and we first came : it is that *Jacob's ladder*, let down to us from heaven to earth, whereby his angels (his messengers) lead up from earth to heaven : it is that *Rahab's scarlet thread*, let down from the window of heaven, to wind us up by : the apostle calls it a *girdle*, the *girdle of TRUTH*,—a girdle that, by many several links, ending where it began, returning whence it first proceeded, clasps itself again in the bosom of its author, God.” According to this noble description of *Truth*, is it not evident, that all the *righteous power*, which works in the spiritual world, is the power of God and of *Truth* ? and therefore, that our Lord answered like divine wisdom *manifest in the flesh*, when he asserted, that *to believe on Him, is to work the work of God*,—that *he who believeth hath everlasting life*,—that *though he were dead, yet shall he live*,—that *he that liveth and believeth on him* (which implies a continuance of the action) *shall never die* :—that *rivers of living water* (streams of comfort and power) *shall flow out of his belly* (i. e. spring from his inmost soul)—and that *he shall do great works ; the GOSPEL being the POWER of God to salvation to every one that BELIEVETH ; and all things being possible to him that believeth*, because his faith apprehends the WORD, TRUTH, and POWER, of the ALMIGHTY.

SECTION IV.

There are various sorts of Truths. Idolatry and Formality consist in putting INFERIOR in the room of SUPERIOR Truths. Evangelical and moral, i. e. religious Truths alone change the heart.

WHEN I said that living faith has *SAVING truth* for its object, I did not use the word *saving* without reason : for, as every stone is not *precious*, so every truth is not *saving*. There are then various sorts of truths. “ *There is a sun*,” is a *physical* or *natural* truth :—“ *Our ideas of the sun are mental pictures of the sun*,” is a *metaphysical* truth :—“ *All the points of a circle are equally distant from the*

centre," is a *mathematical* truth :—" No just conclusion can be drawn from false premises," is a *logical* truth :—" Alexander conquered Persia," is a *historical* truth :—" There is a God, and this God is to be worshipped according to the different manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," are two *religious* truths, the first of which belongs to *natural*, and the second to *revealed religion*.—" Every man is to love his neighbour as himself," is a *moral* truth.—" A spiritual Jew is circumcised in heart, and a spiritual Christian is baptized with the Spirit," is an *evangelical* truth, typified by the outward signs of circumcision and of baptism.

When *natural* and inferior truths raise our minds to the God of *nature* and of *grace*, they answer their *spiritual* ends : but if they are put in the place of their archetypes and antitypes, *the truth of God is changed into a lie*. Take some instances of it : *The invisible things of God*, says St. Paul, *are understood by the things that are made, or visible* ; but, who considers the profound truth couched under his words ? Certainly not those heathen, who worship the *material*, instead of the *immaterial* sun : nor those Jews, who are regardless of the circumcision of the heart, and rest satisfied with an external circumcision : nor those Papists, who pay divine honours to a bit of typical bread, which their fancy has turned into the identical body of our Lord ; nor yet those Protestants, who, being unmindful of the baptism of the Spirit, exert themselves only in sprinkling infants with, or dipping adults in, material water : for they all equally forget, that *the letter of natural and typical things alone profiteth little, or nothing comparatively* ; and that *it killeth*, when it is opposed to *the Spirit*, and made to supersede the invisible and heavenly ARCHETYPES, which *visible* and earthly things shadow out ; or when it causes us to set aside the precious ANTITYPES, which *typical* things point unto.

Thus thousands of sinners, like the rich glutton in the Gospel, are spiritually, if not corporally, *killed* by meats and drinks, which should raise them to their invisible ARCHETYPES, the heavenly manna, and the wine of God's kingdom.—Thus, conjugal love, which should raise married persons to a more lively contemplation of the mystical union between the heavenly bridegroom and his faithful spouse, has a quite contrary effect upon numbers : absurdly resting in the fading type, they think that, "*I have married a wife*" is a sufficient reason to give Christ a bill of divorce, or to show him the greatest indifference.—Thus also the Jews committed the *deadly* sins of idolatry and murder, through their regard for their brazen serpent and the temple ; an extravagant regard this, which caused them to neglect, and at last to

not without difficulty.—Yea, such difficulty as forms *the trial of our faith*, and makes it reasonable in God, to bid us *choose life* rather than death, when truth and error, blessing and cursing, are set before us.

SECTION VII.

The operative belief of the Truth, and the operative belief of a Lie, are the two roots that produce all our good and all our bad actions. An appeal to reason and matter of fact.

No plant can grow without its root, and no moral action can spring into existence without its principle. When we do not dissemble, our principle of action is our *prevalent persuasion*—our *predominant belief*; a cordial, practical *belief of the truth* and rejection of a lie, being always the principle of a *good* action; and a cordial, practical *belief of a lie*, and rejection of the truth, being always the principle of a *bad* action.

That *good* works can have no origin but the *belief of the truth*, will appear indubitable, if we trace them back to their sources. To *fear*, *love*, and *obey* God, are undoubtedly *GOOD* works; but can I do them, without *BELIEVING* the *TRUTH*.—i. e. without believing that *God is*, that *he is to be feared, loved, and obeyed*; and that it is my duty or privilege so to do? Again, that *bad* works can have no other origin but the *belief of a lie*, will also appear evident, if we follow them to their spring. To *neglect* and *disobey* God are certainly *BAD* works; but can we do them without *believing a lie*? Without being more or less persuaded, that, although it may not be our duty, yet, upon the whole, in our present circumstances, it will be for our advantage or credit, to *neglect* God, and to swim with the stream?

May not the preceding argument concerning the *importance of faith*, be confirmed by appeals to reason, experience, and matter of fact? Did not Eve stand in paradise so long as she forbore eating of the forbidden fruit? Did she not forbear eating so long as she *believed* the truth—i. e. so long as she believed she should die if she ate of that fruit? Would she have sinned if she had not first believed a lie, yea, swallowed down a cluster of lies? “That she “should not die:—the fruit was as good as it was fair:—it was to “be desired to make one wise:—she should be as God, &c.”—Were not these untruths, freely entertained in her heart, the causes of her committing the direful deed?

Why did Judas once forsake all to follow the indigent Jesus? Was it not because he *believed* it his real advantage so to do? And did

he not, so far, believe the *truth*, and show his faith by his corresponding works? By and by the spirit of error suggested, that he should be a loser by following, and a gainer by betraying his Master. Was not this an infamous *lie*? When he had believed it, did not his heart become a nest for the old serpent, a throne for the father of lies? And did not our Lord speak the words of soberness and truth, when he said to his disciples, *One of you hath a devil*?

Why did Peter deny his dear Lord? Undoubtedly because in that fatal hour he *believed* that the Jews were more able and ready to fall upon and destroy him, than Christ was to save and defend him. And was not this believing an untruth? When he had completed his crime, why did he go out to weep, and not to hang himself like Judas? Was it not because he admitted the truth again; believing, that where sin had abounded, grace might *yet* superabound; and that great as his crimes were, God's mercy and Christ's love were yet greater?—Saving truths these, which Judas could no longer believe, having *done FINAL despite to the Spirit of TRUTH who leads, not drags, into the truth.*

Why did David attack Goliath with undaunted courage? Was it not because he heartily *believed*, that the Lord would not be insulted by that blaspheming monster, and would stand by any one that attacked him in the name of the God of Israel? A great truth this, through which he waxed valiant in fight, killed his gigantic adversary, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.—Why did he afterward stain his righteous soul with atrocious crimes? Was it not because he practically, and therefore most cordially, believed a horrid untruth: namely, that the company of his neighbour's ewe-lamb was preferable to the delights afforded by the Lamb of God?—Why did he afterward repent? Was it not because he received the truth again; heartily believing, that he had committed dreadful sins, and that he must repent or perish?

Again: Why are men *lovers of the world more than lovers of God*? Is it not because they really *believe*, that the world can make them happier than God?—If I say, “I *believe* that God is preferable to the world,” and do not seek my chief happiness in him, do not I deceive myself, and tell a gross untruth? And while St. James charges me to show my faith by my works, does not St. John show himself a rational divine, when he protests, that the *TRUTH is not in me*? Once more: Why did Saul of Tarsus *breathe threatenings and slaughter* against Christ's members? Was it not because he *believed* the grand lie of his day, i. e. that Christ was an impostor? And why did he afterward breathe nothing but fervent love to Christians,

and unextinguishable zeal for Christ's glory? Was it not because his inmost soul was penetrated with the force of this almighty truth, Christ is the true Messiah; he loved me, and gave himself for me?

From these, and a thousand such observations upon the *conversion* of sinners, and the *perversion* of saints, I draw the following consequences, which, I trust, will recommend themselves to the reason of every calm inquirer after truth.

1. To convert or pervert a man, you need only change his principle of action, his predominant practical belief of a damnable lie, or of a saving truth. For if the spring be new, so undoubtedly will be the streams. If you have a new tree, you will infallibly have new fruit. If the rudder be truly turned, the ship will certainly take a new course.

2. *Truth* is the heavenly seed that produces living faith; and living faith is the heavenly root that produces good works. *Truth* and *faith*, therefore, are at the bottom of every good work. To suppose them absent from a good work, is to suppose that a good work can be void of *sincerity* and *truth*, and of course void of *goodness*. And is not this supposing a glaring absurdity? On the other hand, a *lie* is the hellish seed that produces *unbelief*; and *unbelief* is the hellish root that produces *bad* works. A *lie* and *unbelief* are then at the bottom of every *bad* work. To suppose them absent from a *bad* work, is to suppose that a *bad* work can be wrought in *faith* and in *truth*, which is as impossible as to do a good work in *malice* and *wickedness*.

3. As the rise and fall of a good weather-glass infallibly shows the real, though as yet invisible, alterations of the atmosphere: so our rising from sin and our falling into sin surely evidence the secret, and perhaps unnoticed, changes that happen in our faith for the better or for the worse. For the whole of our words and actions, taken in connexion with our views and tempers, are the certain result of our present faith or unbelief, and consequently the best marks that we please or displease God, according to the last and capital proposition of the Minutes.

4. When there is *Truth* in the inward parts, there is *Faith* also; it being as impossible to admit religious truths any other way but by *faith*, as it is to partake of the light any other way but by *sight*. *Truth* and *Faith* tincture with goodness the most extraordinary actions. Thus Samuel cuts Agag in pieces before the Lord; St. Paul strikes Elymas with blindness; St. Peter strikes Ananias with sudden death; Phinehas runs Zimri and Cosbi through the body; Abraham offers Isaac in *truth* and *faith*; and God counts these actions to them for righteousness to all generations for evermore. On the other hand, the actions that do not spring from *Truth* and *Faith*, be they ever so good

in the eyes of men, are an abomination in the sight of God, who *requires TRUTH in the inward parts*: Thus king Saul offers a sacrifice; Judas pleads for the poor; the Pharisees make long prayers; Pilate washes his hands from the blood of Christ; and God reckons these works to them for sin to all generations for evermore.

5. Some actions, such as the commission of adultery and of murder, can never be tinctured by *truth* and *faith*, because they have for their principle triumphant impurity, gross injustice, and flagrant unbelief; and whenever such sins prevail in the soul, the contrary virtues, holiness, truth, and faith, are gone; just as when racking pains and a putrid fever prevail in the body, ease and health are there no more. To suppose, therefore, that living faith lurked in David's heart during his grievous apostacy, is as absurd as to suppose that health lurks in a body infected by the plague, and life in a corpse. "Ay, but David's faith, like that of Peter, was raised up again:" true; and so was the body of Lazarus, that of our Lord, and that of the Ruler's daughter; but is this a proof that Lazarus, Christ, and the damsel, did not undergo a real death? A concession however I cheerfully make to my objector; wishing that it may be a mean of reconciling him as much to the faith of St. James as I am reconciled to that of St. Paul. If he grant me that Peter's and David's faith went out as really as a candle, which is put under an extinguisher, I will grant him, that, through the long-suffering of God, who never seals the *absolute* reprobation of sinners so long as their day of visitation lasts, the extinct faith of those fallen saints was as an extinguished light, that continues to smoke, and can the sooner be lighted again. Their falls, great as they were, did not amount to complete obduracy, and the sin against the Holy Ghost. *He will not quench the smoking flax*, was a promise in which they were still interested, with all those who have not yet *done final despite to the spirit of grace*. Free grace, therefore, visited them again; and when she put her candle to their hearts, they again knew their day; they welcomed the light; the smoking flax once more caught the pure flame of truth; and living faith, with her luminous train, was rekindled in their breasts. Thus, by improving what remained of the accepted time, they escaped the fate of Judas, who so hardened himself, that his candle was put out in final darkness; they avoided the doom of the foolish virgins, who so procrastinated repentance, that their extinguished lamps were never lighted again. To return:

6. As our pulses all over the body exactly answer to the beating of our heart; so *our INWARD works*, that is, our thoughts, desires, schemes, and tempers, exactly answer to our faith or principle of

action. I say *our* INWARD *works*, because hypocrites can mimic all *external* works. How improperly then is St. Paul quoted against the works of faith! Does he not assure us himself, that saving *faith worketh by love*? And is it not as absurd to oppose the *works* of faith to *faith*, as to oppose the pulses to the beating of the heart; no two things in the world being more strongly connected? However, as the heart always beats before the arteries; and as a cannon is always fired before the explosion can be heard, the ball felt, or the flame perceived, so faith always moves before it can set fear, hope, desire, or love in motion. And if godly fear, hope, desire, and love, which are our *internal* good works, always spring from FAITH; our *external* good works, such as publicly worshipping God, doing good to our neighbour, &c. from a right principle, and in a right manner, always flow from FAITH also: for our external works are nothing but the effects of the works which we have already wrought in our hearts; just as the rapid motion of a ball out of the cannon, is nothing but the effect of the motion that was communicated to it, while it was yet in the cannon.

7. If every internal good work (suppose a sincere *operative* desire to love my enemy for God's sake) necessarily springs from a *good* principle, that is, from true faith; it follows, that so long as I consistently continue in the same disposition, my principle of action is good, and I am (so far) a *good* man, according to the standard of one or another of the Gospel dispensations. On the other hand, if any one inward, bad work, (suppose a malicious desire to hurt my neighbour) springs from a *bad* principle, it follows also, that so long as I continue in that bad disposition, whatever degree of sanctity I may pretend to, my principle of action is *bad*, I am a *wicked* man, of the Pharisaic or of the Antinomian order.—To conclude:

8. As by suppressing the beating of the heart you may stop all the pulses; so by suppressing the act of faith you may put a stop to all good works. On the other hand, as by cutting the main arteries you may put an end to the motion of the heart; so by suppressing the good motions caused by faith, you may put an end to the life of faith, and destroy the new creature in Christ Jesus.

SECTION VIII.

The REASONABLENESS of the doctrine of Salvation by Faith is farther evinced by a variety of arguments.—How much we are indebted to the Solifidians, for having firmly stood up in defence of FAITH: How dearly they have made us pay for that service, when they have so enforced our XIth Article, which guards salvation by faith, as to make void the XIIth, which guards morality.—And why the overpowering splendour of TRUTH is qualified by some shades.

SHOULD some readers still think, that it is unreasonable to dwell first upon faith, and to insist more upon it than upon the other works and graces which adorn the life and character of a Christian; to remove their scruples, and to vindicate more fully the fundamental doctrine of *salvation by faith*, I present them with the following remarks.

1. If true *Faith* is the root that produces hope, charity, and sincere obedience, as the preceding section evinces, is it not reasonable principally to urge the necessity of *believing aright*? The end of all preaching is undoubtedly to plant the tree of evangelical obedience; and how can that tree be planted but by its root? Was a gardener ever charged with unreasonableness, for not setting a tree by the branches?

2. If *faith working by love* is the heart of true religion, should we not bestow our chief attention and care upon it? Suppose you were a physician, and attended a patient who had an imposthume in his stomach, and another on his hand; would you do honour to your skill, if overlooking the internal mischief, you confined your attention to the external ulcer?

3. The most excellent gift of God to man, next to the invaluable gifts of his Son and Spirit, is that of saving *Truth*. Nay, the Son of God, in his prophetic character, came only to display the *Truth*. He was manifested in the flesh to be its herald among men. St. Paul tells us, that *Christ witnessed a good confession before Pilate*; and St. John informs us, that part of this *good confession* ran thus: *To THIS END was I born, and for THIS CAUSE came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto THE TRUTH*. Now, if bearing witness to the TRUTH was a great cause, and a peculiar end of our Lord's coming into the world; if the Spirit itself is called the *Spirit of Truth*, because his grand office is to reveal and seal the truth; if truth is no better than error to us till we receive it by *faith*; and if the Scripture declares four times, that *The just shall LIVE by his FAITH*, a declaration this, which St. Paul confirms by his own experience, when he says, *I LIVE by FAITH*; is it

not evident, that when we practically reject the doctrine of *faith*, we reject *life*, together with all the blessings which are *brought to light by the Gospel*: a Gospel *disbelieved* being undoubtedly a Gospel REJECTED.

4. Our feelings and conduct greatly depend upon our apprehensions of things. A *false* report that your son is dead reaches your ears; you *believe* it, and pangs of grief distract your breast. Soon after a *true* account of his being drowned is brought to you; you *disbelieve* it, and you remain unaffected.—A diamond by moon-light glitters at your feet; you think it is only a glow-worm, and this mistake prevents your stooping to pick it up. A glow-worm shines at some distance; you fancy that it is a diamond, and you run to it with a degree of hope and joy proportionable to the degree of your vain confidence. The God of truth is an infinite, spiritual diamond, if I may use the expression; and yet, so faint are our ideas of his excellence, that we overlook him, and madly run after deceitful objects, the brightest of which are but glow-worms to the *Father of lights*. Nothing, therefore, but a firm *belief of the truth*, stamping our souls with just apprehensions of things, and fixing in us a strong persuasion of their intrinsic worth or vanity, can rectify our judgment, and make us regulate our conduct according to the dictates of God's word, which are invariably one with the truth, and with the nature of things.

5. When St. Paul exhorts his converts to the pursuit of things *honest, just, pure, lovely, &c.* he mentions *first* with great propriety, *whatsoever things are TRUE*. For, as soon as obedient *faith* allows *Truth* to sit upon the throne, there is an end of mental anarchy: all things resume their proper ranks and places. Creatures in a great degree disappear before their Creator; earth, before heaven; and time, before eternity. Thus Satan's charm is broken, God begins to be to us, what he is in himself, *all in all*; and when we *see* him such, if our faith be lively and practical, we *treat* him as such; we answer the end of our creation; truth prevails: *Satan falls as lightning from heaven*: man is man; and God is God.

6. If *truth*, next to God, is the most powerful thing in the world: if we have no communion with God, but by the medium of *truth*: if *falsehood* is the rankest poison in hell; and if we take a draught of this poison, as often as we take in a capital religious error; can you reasonably explode the doctrine of *salvation by faith*, since the office of living *faith* is to expel the poison of destructive error, and to receive the reviving, healing, strengthening cordial of Gospel truth.

7. If an *unfeigned faith* in the Truths, which God reveals under one or another of his evangelical dispensations, is the instrumental

cause of all our good works ; whilst a cordial consent to one or more of Satan's lies, is the parent of all our bad actions ;—if these two springs move every wheel of righteousness and of iniquity in the world ; is it not highly consistent with reason to mind them *first* ? Would you not pity your watchmaker, if he so regarded the hand and dial-plate of your watch, as to forget the wheel-work and spring ? And can you approve the method of Honestus, who insists upon good works, without ever touching upon the *principles* of sincere obedience, and upon *faith*, which is the spring that sets all in motion.

8. Again, If Abraham, by not *staggering at the promise of God through UNBELIEF*, and by being strong in FAITH, gave glory to God, and set to his seal that God is true :—if you cannot honour a superior more than by receiving his every word with respectful confidence, and moving at his every beck with obedient alacrity :—and if *faith* thus honours God, why should you refuse it the first place among the graces which support and adorn the church militant ? Especially since the Lord declares, that *the PURE in HEART shall see God*, and that our HEARTS are PURIFIED by FAITH ?—And since the Scriptures testify, that *without HOLINESS no man shall see the Lord*, and that we are SANCTIFIED through FAITH that is in him ?

9. All fulness dwells in God ; creatures abstracted from the divine plenitude are mere emptiness. Rational creatures, in their most perfect state, are only *moral vessels*, filled with the grace of God, and reflecting the light of divine Truth. Now if we can be saved by any other way than by *grace through obedient faith*, i. e. by freely receiving the grace and light of God, through the practical belief of the Truth proposed to us :—if we are in any degree saved by our *proper* merit through *faithless* works ; we may indulge Pharisaic boasting. But, God does not so give his glory to human worms : therefore such a *boasting is excluded by the law of faith* ; and the apostle wisely observes, that *salvation is of FAITH, that it may be by GRACE* ; the justifying *faith* of sinners always implying a cordial acknowledgment of their sin and misery, and a hearty recourse to the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Dayspring from on high has visited us more or less clearly, according to the dispensation we are under.*

* To establish the doctrine of the Gospel dispensations ; to show that saving truth, in its various manifestations, is the object of saving faith ; I need only prove that a man, in order to his salvation, is bound to believe at one time, what he was not bound to believe at another. Take one instance out of many. If St. Peter had died just after he had been pronounced blessed, for acknowledging that our Lord was the Son of God, he could not have been cursed with a "*Depart from me,*" &c. He would have been saved : and, in that case, he would

10. The manner in which *faith* and its works *exclude boasting*, may be illustrated by a comparison. A beggar lies dying at your door, you offer him a cordial, he takes it, revives, and works.—A deserter is going to be shot, you bring him a pardon from the king, if he will receive it with grateful humility, he does so, joins his regiment, and fights with such courage that he is promoted. Now in these cases it is evident that *Pharisaic boasting* * is excluded. If the beggar live ever so long, and work ever so hard—if the deserter fight ever so manfully, and raised ever so high; yet they can never say, that *their doings* have procured them the life which they enjoy; for, before they did such works, that life was graciously given, or restored to them upon the easy terms of confidently taking a remedy, and humbly accepting a pardon offered. The application is easy: by our fallen nature we are *conceived in sin, and children of wrath*; God freely gives us the light of life in Jesus Christ; faith without necessity humbly receives it, and works by it; the believer, therefore, can never be so unreasonable and ungrateful, as to suppose that his working merited him *the light of life*, by which he began to work righteousness; so long as he deserves the name of a believer, he knows, he feels that his faith is in the FIRST place a *mere receiver*.

have obtained salvation without believing one tittle about our Lord's *resurrection*, and might I not also say, about his *crucifixion*? And nevertheless, St. Paul, a few years after, justly represented that article as essential to the *salvation* of those to whom it is revealed: *If thou shalt BELIEVE with thy heart, that God hath RAISED the Lord Jesus from the dead, thou shalt be saved*, Rom. x. 9.—Few people, I think, can read the Acts of the Apostles, without seeing, that the numerous conversions wrought by St. Peter's preaching, were wrought by the force of this truth, "*God has raised up that Jesus, whom you have crucified*:" A victorious *truth* this, which would have been a gross *untruth* three months before the day of pentecost.—Nay, what is at one time an article of *saving* faith, may at another time become an article of the most confirmed unbelief: thus, the expectation of the Messiah, which was a capital article of the faith of the ancient Israelites, is now the buttress of the Babel of modern Jews. The property of faith then is to make our hearts bow to the truth, as it is manifested to us; it being evident that God never blamed the children of men for not believing what was never revealed to them.

[MEMORANDUM.] In page 241, I have said "That the *genuine seed* of the word is *always good, always full of divine energy*." I desire the candid reader to read the following lines as more particularly expressive of my meaning

The word is *Truth*; and *Truth*, like the sun, is always efficacious where its light penetrates. But I would by no means insinuate, that the truth may not, like the sun, shine more brightly and powerfully at one time than at another; the word of truth, however, always performs (though more or less sensibly) that whereunto God sends it; being always a *savour of life unto life to them that believe*, or of *death unto death to wilful unbelievers*, according to the grand decree of *conditional election and reprobation*. *He that believeth, &c. shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned*.

* There is an *evangelical boasting*, which St. Paul recommends to others, and indulges himself. See the note, page 203.

What hast thou, that thou hast not received, roars like thunder in the ears of a lively faith, and like lightning strikes dead the *Pharisaic* boast.

11. I say that faith is in the first place a *mere receiver*: this deserves attention. If we consider faith as a conduit-pipe, which at one end receives the truth and power of God, and at the other end refunds those living streams to water the garden of the Lord; we may with propriety compare that mother-grace to the pipe of a watering pot, which, at the internal, unseen opening, receives the water that is in the pot; and at the external, visible perforations, returns it, and forms artificial showers over the drooping plants. According to the doctrine of *grace*, maintained by the Solifidians, faith does nothing but *receive* the grace of God, through Christ; and according to the doctrine of *works*, maintained by the moralists, faith is a mere *bestower*: but, according to the Gospel of Christ, which embraces and connects the two extremes of truth, Faith is *first* an humble, passive *receiver*, and *then* a cheerful, active *bestower*: it receives grace and truth, and returns love and good works. In that respect it resembles the heart, which continually receives the blood from the veins, and returns it into the arteries. If the heart cease either to *receive*, or to *return* the blood (no matter which) its motion and our animal life are soon at an end: and if faith cease either to receive grace or to return good works, its motion and its life soon terminate in spiritual death, according to the doctrine of St. James. If the Solifidians and moralists candidly looked at faith in this rational and scriptural light, they would soon embrace the whole Gospel, and one another. By considering *faith* as a RECEIVER, according to the first Gospel axiom, Honestus would avoid the *Pharisaic* extreme; and by viewing it as a BESTOWER, according to the second Gospel axiom, Zelotes would avoid the Antinomian delusion: and both would jointly recommend the humble, cheerful, consistent *passiveness* and *activity* of Bible believers.

12. *If we receive the witness of men*, says St. John, *the witness of God is greater: for under the Christian dispensation, this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son: He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the testimony in himself; but he that believeth not God hath MADE HIM A LIAR, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.* Upon these awful words I raise the following argument. If a state of absolute doubt is quite unnatural:—if it is almost impossible to keep the balance of our judgment unturned for one hour with respect to *all* saving truths and destructive lies:—if

the stream of life, which hurries us along, calls us every moment to action:—if we *continually* do good or bad works:—if good works certainly spring from saving *faith*, and bad works from destructive *unbelief*:—if sceptics are only so in imagination, theory, and profession:—if our daily *conduct* demonstrates whether our heart inclines most to the *lies* of Satan, or to the *truths* of God:—and if the moment we *practically* reject God's truths, we embrace the lies of the god of this world, and by that mean take him for our god:—if, I say, this is the case, what reasonable man can be surprised to hear the mild Jesus say, *He that believeth not shall be damned?* Can there be a greater sin—a sin more productive of all iniquity, and more horrid, than to *make* the lying devil a god, and the true God a liar? Nevertheless, dreadful to say! this double crime is actually committed by all that live in wilful, practical unbelief; and the commission of it is indirectly recommended by all those who decry the doctrine of *salvation by faith*.

Lastly: If our first parents fell by BELIEVING the gross *lies* told them by the serpent; is God unreasonable to raise us by making us BELIEVE the great *truths* peculiar to our dispensation, that the divine *heaven of sincerity and truth* may counterwork, and at last expel the Satanic *heaven of malice and wickedness*? Who ever thought it absurd in a physician to proportion the remedy to the disease; the antidote to the poison? And why should even the incarnation of the Son of God appear a mean too wonderful for an end so important? Why should it be thought incredible, that the Son of God, who, as our Creator, is far more nearly related to us than our natural parents, should have graciously stooped as low as the human nature to redeem us; when Satan wantonly stooped as low as the *beastly* nature to tempt us? On the contrary, is it not absurd to suppose, that hellish, wanton malice has done more to destroy, than heavenly, creating love to save the children of men? For my part, the more I compare the genuine Gospel with the nature of things, the more I admire their harmony; wondering equally at the prejudices of those hasty professors, who pour perpetual contempt upon reason, to keep *their* irrational opinions in countenance; and at the unreasonableness of those pretended votaries of reason, who suppose, that the doctrine of salvation by faith is incompatible with good sense.

“But,” says an objector, “if unfeigned faith or a cordial *belief* of *the truth* instrumentally turns us from the power of Satan to God; why have you published tracts against the Solifidians, whose favourite doctrine is, *Believe: he that believeth hath everlasting life?*”

Ans. By the preceding pages it is evident that we do not differ from the Solifidians when they preach *salvation by faith* in a rational and Scriptural manner. So long as they do this, we *wish them good luck* in the name of the Lord. Nay, I publicly return them my sincere thanks for the bold stand they have made for *faith*, when the floods of Pharisaic ungodliness lifted up their voice against that mother-grace, and threatened to destroy her with all her offspring. But alas! how dear have they made us pay for that service, when they have asserted, or insinuated, that true faith is inamissible, that it can live in a heart totally depraved, that a man's faith can be good when his actions are bad, detestable, diabolical: in a word, that true Christians may go any length in sin, may plunge into adultery, murder, or incest, and even proceed to the open worship of devils, like Solomon, without losing their title to a throne of glory, and their justifying, sanctifying, saving faith.

This they have done in flat opposition to our Lord's doctrine: A *good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither does a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit: for every tree is known by its own fruit*, Luke vi. 43.—And this, some of them seem determined to do, to the stumbling of the judicious, the deceiving of the simple, and the hardening of infidels; notwithstanding our XIIth article, which strongly guards the doctrine of faith against their Solifidian error.—“Good works,” says our church in that truly anti-calvinistic article, “do” at this present time, “spring out NECESSARILY of a true and lively faith,” and consequently bad works, of a false and dead faith: “insomuch that by them a LIVELY,” and by bad works a DEAD, “faith may be as evidently known, as a tree is discerned by the fruit.”

But, in the mean time, how do they evade the force of that article? Why thus, David bears this year the fruit of adultery, hypocrisy, treachery, and murder, before all his kingdom: last year he bore the fruit of chastity, sincerity, truth, and brotherly love. However, according to the Crispian doctrines of grace, David must be a *tree of righteousness* now, as much as when he bore the *fruits of righteousness*. If this be not the case, Mr. Fulsome's Gospel will be false: Now this must not be. *That Gospel must stand*.—“But if it stand, our XIIth article falls to the ground.”—Oh! we can prop it by saying, that though a child of God, a tree of righteousness, may *now* produce adultery, &c. &c. &c. yet he will certainly produce good fruit again *by and by*. To this salvo I answer, that the article has only two grand designs: the one inseparably to connect a *lively* faith and *good works*; and the other, to indicate the manner in which I

may know whether I have a *lively* or a *dead* faith. Now, if I may have a *lively* faith while I commit adultery, &c. &c. &c. it evidently follows : 1. That the *necessary* connexion between a *lively* faith and *good* works is totally lost. 2. That *adultery* and *murder* may denote a *lively* faith as well as *purity* and *love*.—And, 3. That our XIIth article has not even the worth of a nose of wax, and may be burned with St. James's Epistle, as an article of "straw." And yet these gentlemen are the persons, that represent themselves as the only *fair* subscribers to our articles, and charge us with prevarication for taking the XVIIth article in connexion with the VIth, the XIIth, the XVIth, and the XXXIst, as well as with the latter part of that article itself, which demands that the election it speaks of be understood of *conditional* election !

To return : Should the reader object, that " if God had suspended our salvation upon our *practical belief of the truth*, he would have put so conspicuous ■ badge upon the saving truth peculiar to each dispensation, that nobody could have mistaken it for error, enthusiasm, priestcraft, or nonsense." I answer :

1. God having decreed to prove the loyalty and moral sagacity of his rational creatures, could not but place them in circumstances in which they might have an opportunity of exerting themselves. If hares were chained at the doors of dog-kennels, what sagacity could hounds manifest above mastiffs ? And if the deepest truths always lay within the reach of the most besotted souls, what advantage would candid, diligent inquirers have over those, who wrap their minds in the vail of prejudice, and stupidly compose themselves to sleep in the arms of ignorance and sloth ?

2. God will *reward* us according to our works of faith ; but if the truth were attended with an *irresistible* energy, if it shone *always* upon our minds as transcendently bright, as the dazzling sun does sometimes upon our faces, would God display his wisdom in *rewarding* us for confessing it ? Did he—did any man in his senses ever offer to reward us for believing, that ■ bright luminary rules the day, when its meridian glory overpowers our sight ?

3. Pearls are found in the bottom of the sea : gold and diamonds lie generally deep in the earth : we sink pits to a prodigious depth, only to come at the black mineral which we burn. Thousands of men go as far as the East and West Indies, to fill our canisters with tea and sugar. Our meanest tradesmen sip the dews of both hemispheres at a breakfast. And yet, it may be, with a dish of tea in our hand, and a gold ring on our finger, we gravely complain that saving

truth lies a great way off, and that God is unjust in placing it in obscure mines, which cannot be worked without some trouble and industry.

4. But although nobody can be established in the truth without *LABOURING for the meat that endureth to everlasting life*; yet God's terms of salvation are not so hard as some prejudiced people conceive. Nor do I scruple to assert, that if we could read the hearts of all men, we would see that, for a time, unbelievers take as much pains to *exclude* the light of truth, as believers do to *welcome* it; and that wicked men work as intensely, though not as intentionally, to make their reprobation and damnation certain, as good men do to make their *culling and election sure*: For, *the wicked is snared in the work of HIS OWN hands*:—*the reward of HIS HANDS shall be given him*:—*the wages of his sin is death*, and he frequently toils like a horse for his wages, *drawing iniquity with cords of vanity*, and *sin as with a cart rope*, to hale himself and others into the burning lake.

From the preceding answers I conclude; that God, who makes the golden light of the sun and the silver light of the moon succeed each other, and who wisely tempers the blaze of a summer's day, by the mildness of the starry night, with equal wisdom qualifies the blaze of the day of *truth* by the mild obscurity of a night of *probation*; not only that the *flaming* truth may be more delightful at its return, but also, that there may be room left for a *gentle trial* of our faith, and for the *reasonable rewardableness* of our works of faith.

SECTION IX.

INFERENCES.

1. If *faith* be so closely connected with *TRUTH*; *present salvation* with *faith*; and *eternal salvation* with the *works of faith*; how injudicious are those gentlemen, who assert, that *principles* are nothing; and that it little matters what doctrines we hold, provided our actions be good! Alas! if our leading principles be wrong, how can our actions be right? If we be men of *no* principles, or of *bad* principles, and do seemingly good actions; do we not do them from *bad*, *Pharisaical* motives? Even when such actions appear good to man, who judges according to appearance; are they not evil before the Searcher of hearts? Are they not detestable before the Examiner of principles? Undoubtedly; *hypocrisy* being the most odious sort of iniquity in the sight of him who *requires truth in the inward parts*.

2. If the effects of *Truth* be so wonderful ; and if the pure *word* of God be essentially one with *Truth* ; how fatal is the mistake of the laymen, who slight the Gospel word ! who listen to a sermon with less attention than they do to a play ! and who read the Scriptures with less eagerness than they do the newspapers ! And how culpable are those clergymen, who preach the first sermon they set their hand upon, without examining whether it contain truth, or error, or a mixture of both :—at least, without considering whether it be adapted to the capacity and circumstances of their hearers !

3. Can we decry *prejudice* too much, if it unfit our souls for receiving the truth, as trash unfits our stomachs for receiving proper food ? Should not a narrow, bigoted spirit, that collects itself like a hedgehog in its own fancied orthodoxy, and bristles up assertions and invectives instead of arguments, be firmly opposed by every generous inquirer after Truth ? Can we deplore too much the case of those sanguine persons, who judge of the strength of their faith by the force of their prepossession ; and who fancy, that a hundred plain scriptures, and as many cogent arguments, have no weight, if they do not countenance their favourite sentiments, and misunderstood feelings ? And can we too warmly recommend a candid, sober, fearless turn of mind, which lays us open to information, and disposes us publicly to espouse the cause of Truth ; even when destruction threatens her, and her despised adherents ?

4. *Charity rejoiceth in the TRUTH* ; and though *I speak with the tongues of angels*, says St. Paul, *if I have not charity*, i. e. if I do not rejoice in the TRUTH, whether it makes for or against my prejudices, *I am become as sounding brass*. Upon this footing, what can we say of those warm moralists, who, in their zeal for *works*, are ready to burn against the doctrine of faith ? What of those rash Solifidians, who, in their zeal for *faith*, are ready to lay down their lives against the doctrine of works ? Alas ! like St. Paul in the days of his ignorance, they court, and yet persecute the Truth ; they embrace, and yet stab the divine stranger. These false martyrs may give their body to be burnt for one truth against another ; but God will say to them, *Who required this at your hands ?* and they themselves will say, *It profiteth us nothing*.

5. If there be various forms in the school of Truth, how unreasonable is it to say, that none have any acquaintance with her, but such as are in one of the highest forms ! And if the temple of Truth has various divisions to which we advance, as we go on *from faith to faith* ; how cruel is it to consign over to damnation the sincere souls who have yet got no farther than the porch !

6. If there are as many sorts of religious truths as there are of nourishing food, how irrational is it to despise those truths, which the apostle compares to *milk*, merely because they are not the truths which he calls *strong meat*! On the other hand, if we cannot yet receive those strong truths, how rash are we, if we represent them as chaff or poison? And what mischief is done in the church of Christ by those who deal in palpable absurdities, and in errors demonstrated to be of a stupifying or intoxicating nature; especially if they retail such errors to an injudicious, credulous populace, under the name of *rich honey* and *Gospel marrow*!

7. If divine Truth is ONE, through its various appearances; and if *the light of the righteous*, who holds on his way, *shines more and more unto the perfect day*; what shall we say of those prejudiced men, who oppose the Truth with all their might, merely because it does not come up to their false standard, or because it appears in a dress to which they are not accustomed? Did a Persian ever refuse to admire the rising sun, because it was not the *meridian* sun; or laugh at it, as being an insignificant meteor, because it rose under a cloud? If Christ is not ashamed to call himself *the Light* and *the Truth*, should we be ashamed to confess him in his lowest appearances? If Christ, exalted at the right hand of God, is one with Christ transfigured on the mount,—bleeding on Calvary,—lying in the manger,—confined, a helpless embryo in the virgin's womb; may not the triumphant Truth, that shines like the sun in the heart of a *father in Christ*, have some affinity with the spark, that glows in the heart of an infant in grace under the dispensation of Noah? Ought we to give up the greatest part of our neighbours, as men that "*never had grace*," when the Scripture expressly declares, that *the saving grace of God has appeared unto all men*, and that *Christ is the light of the world, that enlightens every man*? Let mystical Herods seek the young child's life; but thou, man of God, leap for joy like the unborn Baptist, before the least and feeblest appearance of thy Lord. Instead of calling it "*common grace*," that thou mayest cut it off the next moment as "*no grace*," cherish it as *saving grace* in thy own breast, and in the hearts of all that are around thee.

8. If the most powerful displays of Truth improve its feeblest appearances, without ever contradicting them; how mistaken are the men who impose upon us the immoral doctrines of the *Antinomians*, and the unevangelical doctrines of the *Pharisees*! When we have once admitted, that "*There is a holy God, who makes a difference between the just and the unjust*;" can we, without renouncing that truth, become Antinomians, and think that a man, who actually defiles

his neighbour's wife, can be *a man after God's own heart*?—And when we have been taught our second gracious lesson; namely, that “We are miserable sinners;” can we, without renouncing this principle, suppose that we can be saved any other way than by the covenant of grace and mercy? Away then, for ever away with *Antinomian* and *Pharisaic* delusions, which are built upon the ruins of those two capital truths, *God is holy*, and *Man is sinful*!

SECTION X.

An Address to Baptized Heathens.

HERE I would take leave of my readers; but they have *consciences* as well as *reason*; and therefore I beg leave to address the former of those powers, as bluntly as I have done the latter; diversifying my expostulations, according to the different cases of the persons into whose hands Providence may direct these sheets.

I. If you do not make the bulk of my readers, I fear you make the bulk of the nation, O ye that regard pleasure, profit, and honour, more than justice, mercy, and the fear of God:—Ye, that far from embracing divine *Truth* at the hazard of your character, spread abroad scandalous *untruths*, to the ruin of other people's reputations:—Ye, who try to persuade yourselves, that religion is nothing but a monstrous compound of superstition, enthusiasm, and priestcraft: Ye, who can violate the laws of temperance or honesty without one painful remorse; breaking through promises, oaths, and matrimonial or sacramental engagements, as if there were no future state, no supreme Judge, no day of retribution, no divine law enacting, that *whosoever loveth, or maketh a lie, shall be cast into the lake of fire*; that *the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the people that forget God*:—Ye are the persons, that I beg leave to call BAPTIZED HEATHENS. Baptismal water was applied to your bodies, as a figure of the grace which purifies believing souls. Ye received, and continue to bear a *Christian* name, that binds upon you the strongest obligations you can possibly be under, to partake of *Christ's* holiness, and to lead a sober, *Christian* life: but how opposite is your conduct to that of *Christ*? Alas! conscientious *heathens* would disown you; and shall God own you? Shall the Searcher of hearts forgive your *immorality*, in consideration of your *hypocrisy*? Will you live and die with such a *lie* in your right hand, and upon your forehead? God forbid!—If you have not sold yourselves to the father of deceits for ever; pay yet some

attention to *natural, moral, and evangelical truths*: they recommend themselves to your senses, your reason, and your conscience.

1. Regard *natural Truths*. Earthly joys vanish like dreams. Life flies like an arrow. Your friends or neighbours are daily seized by sickness, and dragged into eternity. Death comes to terminate your delusions, and set his black seal upon your false lips, your wanton eyes, your rapacious hands, your luxurious palates, your sinful, treacherous breasts. Ere long the king of terrors will screw you down in his hard couch, a *coffin*: he will convey you away in his black carriage, a *hearse*: he will confine you to his loathsome dungeon, a *grave*; and there he will keep you in chains of darkness and corruption, till the trump of God summon you to *judgment*.

2. And say not that the doctrine of a day of *judgment* is a fable. If you do, I appeal to *moral Truths*. Is there not an essential difference between truth and falsehood, between mercy and cruelty, between honesty and villany? Have you, with all the pains you have taken about it, been able to erase from your breasts the law of truth and mercy, which the righteous God has deeply engraven there? Is there not something within you, that, bad as you are, forbids you to wish your father dead, that you may have his estate; and your wife poisoned, that you may marry the woman you love? If you say, that these are only prejudices of education; I ask, How came these prejudices to be universal? Why are they *the same*, even where the methods of education are most *contrary*? Why do they reign in the very countries where there are neither *magistrates* nor *priests*; and where, of course, *politics* and *priestcraft* never bore the sway? If your consciences would condemn you for the above-mentioned crimes; how much more will God do it, who is the Author and Judge of your consciences? Does not your good sense tell you, that, so sure as the wonderful machine of this world did not make, and does not preserve itself, there is a God, who made and preserves it? and that this God is possessed of ten thousand times more truth, equity, impartiality, justice, and power, than all the *righteous* rulers in the world were ever endued with? And to say nothing of the gracious check, and sad forebodings of your guilty consciences; does not your *reason* discover, that as certainly as this great God is possessed of infinite wisdom, power, and justice; and has given us a moral law, he will call us to an account for our breaches of it; and that, as he does not in general do it in this world, he will infallibly do it in a future state?

3. If reason and conscience thus lead you to religion; regard *religious truths*: they are supported by so great a variety of well-

attested facts, by such clouds of righteous witnesses, by so many astonishing miracles, and accomplished prophecies :—they so perfectly agree with the glory of our Creator, the interests of mankind, the laws of our nature, and the native desire we have for immortality :—they so exactly coincide with our present, as well as future happiness ; that you cannot expose your unreasonableness more, and do yourselves a greater injury, than by rejecting them.

What *reasonable* objection can you make to these scriptural directions ? *Cease to do evil. Learn to do good. Speak the TRUTH in LOVE. Return to the Lord. Call upon his name.* Say, “Grant to us in this world the knowledge of thy TRUTH, and in the world to come life everlasting.” Confess yourselves sinners, great sinners : spread this melancholy truth before the throne of divine mercy ;—spread it with tears of undissembled repentance. *Except you repent, you shall all perish : but, if you sow in tears, you shall reap in joy.*

And suppose not, that I want to drive you to despair. On the contrary, I declare, that dangerous as your case is, it is not absolutely desperate. The Gospel offers you a remedy. You have dealt with lying shadows, but you may yet embrace the eternal substance. You have wounded the truth ; but Christ, from whom you have the name of *Christian*,—Christ, who says, *I am the Truth*, has been wounded for you. You have crucified revealed Truth, and the Prince of Life has been crucified in your place. I point you to his cross, and declare in the name of unprejudiced reason, that few histories are supported by such a variety of indisputable evidences as the wonders that redeeming love wrought on Calvary for you.

Let not the scandalous falls of apostates, and the bad lives of hypocritical Christians, frighten you from the Gospel. Immoral and unloving men, high as their pretensions to faith may be, are no more Christians than you. Suffer not the disputes of professors to keep you in infidelity ; for they prove the truth, and not the falsehood of Christianity ; being expressly foretold ; Acts xx. 30. 1 Cor. xi. 19. Jude 4. 1 Tim. iv. 1. Nor stupidly wonder that the serpent should most spitefully bruise the heel of the Truth that most powerfully bruises his head. Above all, be candid ; be inquisitive ; apply to the *Father of lights* for direction ; and his invisible hand will conduct you over every rock of offence, and lead you to the sure foundation, *the Rock of ages, the TRUTH as it is in Jesus.*

How near is that *Truth* to you ! It always *embraces* Mercy, and mercy now embraces you. O the length and breadth, the depth and height of redeeming mercy ! It spares you to believe—to repent—to live. The arms of divine patience still encircle your guilty

souls, and bear up your mortal bodies above the terrors of the grave. Crying as your sins are, the cries of your Saviour's blood are yet heard above them. Provoking as your unbelief is, it has not yet provoked God to set upon you the seal of absolute reprobation. Unspotted Holiness, glorious Majesty, flaming Power, thundering Justice, weeping Mercy, bleeding Love ;—all the divine attributes join yet in a concert of grace and truth. You are the objects of it ; and the burden of their terrifying, melting accents is, *Turn ye, turn ye : Why will ye die, O house of Israel ? Why should iniquity be your ruin ? Turn ! for I have redeemed you. Turn ! and the second death shall have no power over you. Turn ! and you shall have a crown of life.*

Thus, my dear fellow-sinners, and far more earnestly than I can describe, Mercy and Truth exert themselves in your behalf ; waiting only for your consent to diffuse their divine perfumes through your converted souls. This is *the day of God's power*—Your Gospel day :—This is *a day of salvation*, a day of spiritual jubilee, a day of the *year of release* : know it : improve it. Break your bonds : claim your liberty : change your service : scorn to be the devil's drudges : become the servants of the Most High. Regard neither the husks nor the grunts of the swine : the heavenly feast is before you. The Father of the prodigal son runs to meet, to forgive, to welcome, to embrace you ; and to raise your doubting hearts, he bids me impress these gracious promises upon your yielding breasts. *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and does that which is lawful and right, (and what is more lawful and right for sinners, than to repent, believe, and obey the Gospel ?) he shall save his soul alive.—Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, for he is merciful ; and to our God, for he will* ABUNDANTLY *pardon.*

SECTION XI.

An Address to Christianized Jews.

AND ye, Christianized Jews, will ye still be offended at our sincerely preaching *free grace* to all our fellow-Gentiles ? Will ye still stop your ears and cry out, *The children of Abraham, the temple of the Lord are we ?* Or, in other terms, We are the little flock necessarily contradistinguished from the immense herd of *absolute* reprobates ? Will ye still assert ? “ *Reprobos ideo in hanc pravitatem addictos, quia justo et inscrutabili Dei judicio suscitati sunt ad gloriam ejus*

“sua damnatione illustrandam :” * “*That the reprobates are devoted to wickedness, because through the just and unsearchable judgment of God, they were raised up to illustrate his glory by their damnation?*” —Will ye still add? “*Quos vero damnationi addicit, his justo quidem et irreprehensibili, sed incomprehensibili ejus judicio vitæ aditum præcludi :*” * “*That by God’s just and irreprehensible, though incomprehensible judgment, the way to life is blocked up for those whom he has devoted to damnation?*” —Will ye never blush to intimate? “*Quos ergo Deus præterit, reprobat : neque aliâ causâ, nisi quod ab hæreditate, quam filiis suis prædestinat, illos vult excludere.*” * “*Therefore those whom God passes by, he reprobates ; for no other reason but this ; HE WILL exclude them from the inheritance which he predestinates for his sons?*” —Will ye still call “blind” all who think, that God is sincerely loving to every man, without any exception in the day of salvation? Will ye still monopolize the light that enlightens every man who comes into the world? Will ye still sound the bottomless abyss of divine mercy with your short line, and judge of the Almighty’s enlarged heart by the narrowness of your own? O learn to know the God of Love, the God of Truth, better. He is not willing that ANY should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance.—He commands ALL men every where to repent. And he bids us account his long-suffering, salvation ; assuring us, that the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, lead to repentance even those wretches, who, after their hardness and impenitent heart, treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of his righteous judgment.

If you will not credit God’s word, pay at least some regard to his OATH. As I LIVE, says he, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live.—Just as if he said : “By myself I swear, that I have absolutely reprobated no man. If any perish, their destruction is of themselves, and not of merciless decrees rashly imputed to my sovereignty. Free agency in man, and not free wrath in me, sinks those who make their conditional rejection and reprobation sure by their unnecessary unbelief, and avoidable impenitency. Far from delighting absolutely in the reprobation of any one sinner, I solemnly protest, that I would offer violence to the liberty of the most obstinate, and force them all into heaven by the exertion of my omnipotence, if my Truth as a Lawgiver, my Justice as a Judge, my Veracity as the Inspirer of

* These three quotations are taken from *Calvin’s Institutes. Third Book. Chap. 24. Sec. 14.—Chap. 21. Sec. 7.—Chap. 23. Sec. 1.*

“ my prophets, my Wisdom as a Rewarder, and my Equity as a Punisher, did not absolutely forbid it.”

Come then, my prepossessed brethren, show yourselves *the children of Abraham*: return to the God of your Father—the God by whom *ALL the families of the earth may be BLESSED in the seed of Abraham*. Think not that the Lord is only jealous of his supreme dominion; nor make him *graceless and merciless* towards countless myriads of reprobated infants, to extol the *grim sovereignty* which your imagination has set up.

“ Set not at odds heaven’s jarring attributes ;

“ Nor, with one excellence, another wound.”

Allow God to be “ all o’er, consummate, absolute,

“ Full orb’d, in his whole round of rays complete,”

merciful in the day of salvation, and *just* in the day of judgment, to every individual of the human race. What can you possibly object to a doctrine so rational, so scriptural, so worthy of God ?

If you complain that we make the way to heaven too broad, I ask, Ought we not to represent it as broad as the Scriptures make it ? Do we make it *WIDER* than St. Peter did, when truth and love made him divest himself of his Jewish prejudices, and cry out with pleasing amaze : *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him ?* Or, do we make it *NARROWER* than St. Paul, when he wrote, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die : no adulterer, &c. hath ANY inheritance in the kingdom of God ?*

For your own credit do not ask : “ If all men may be saved through Christ, by following the light of the Gospel dispensation, which they are under, what advantage hath the Christian ? and what profit is there of baptism and Christianity ?” If you make such an objection, you “ show yourselves to be *CHRISTIANIZED JEWS*” indeed. The apostle has just said, *If the uncircumcision, i. e. if uncircumcised heathens (like Melchisedec or Job, Cornelius or the Canaanitish woman) keep the righteousness of the law according to their light, shall not their uncircumcision be counted for circumcision ? that is, shall they not be saved, as well as if they were circumcised Jews ?* St. Paul saw, that the partial hearts of the Jews would take fright at his doctrine ; and would start an objection, capable of demolishing, if possible, the impartiality of God, and the freeness of the everlasting Gospel. He therefore produces this formidable objection thus : *If the Gentiles may be saved by following their light, what advantage hath the Jew ? or what profit is there of circumcision ?* Rom. iii. 1.

The answer which he gives, stops the mouths of all Jews, whether they live in London, Rome, or Jerusalem : *The Jews*, says he, (and much more the Christians) *have much advantage every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God.* The Heathens have only the light of God's works, the light of God's providence, the light of reason, the light of conscience, and the light of that saving grace, which has appeared to all men, teaching them to live soberly, &c. and reproving them when they do not. But the Jews, (to say nothing of the light of tradition, which is far brighter among them than among the heathens) over and above this *fivefold* light, have the light of the *Old Testament* ; and Christians the light of the *New*.

Come then, my prejudiced brethren, let St. Paul's answer satisfy you. Get from under your parched gourd of reprobation : *Let not your eye be evil because God is good* ; nor fret, like Jonah, because the Father of mercies extends his compassion even to all the humbled heathens in the great city of Nineveh. *As the elect of God, put on bowels of mercy*, and show yourselves the genuine children of him *who is loving to every man, and whose mercy is over all his works* : so shall your mistakes no longer straiten your minds, sour your tempers, and shut your hearts against your "*non-elected*" neighbours.

And supposing you are of the happy few, in whose souls the impartial grace of God overrules the ordinary consequences of your partial doctrines :—Supposing you are *LOVING to every man*, and have more bowels of mercy than the God whom you extol :—Supposing you are *TRUE to all men*, and surpass in *sincerity* the God whom you recommend, who calls *all men every where to repent*, and all the day long stretches out his hands in token of his compassionate love to people, on whom he absolutely fixed his immortal hatred before the foundation of the world :—Supposing, I say, you have the happiness of being so much better than your principles, so much holier than the god of your *OPINIONS* ; [*Note : I say not the God of your SALVATION*]—Yet, by renouncing those *opinions*, you will no longer countenance Antinomianism, deceive the simple, contradict yourselves, shock moralists, and render Christianity contemptible in the eyes of all, that confound it with your doctrines of *forcible* grace to hundreds, and of *forcible* wrath to thousands.

* Should you countenance your *Jewish* notions by saying, "*We are Christians : we have nothing to do with the heathens ;*" I answer :

* Should the persons whom I now address, say, that I falsify my subscriptions to the XVIIIth Article of our Church, by asserting that even the heathens, who fear God and work righteousness by the *general* light of Christ's grace, are accepted through Christ's

1. You have far too much to do with them, when, by the “doctrine of grace,” which you so zealously inculcate, you *indirectly* send them, one and all, to the pit, unless they are brought under the *Christian* dispensation. 2. You renounce the Church of England, if you disregard them: for on Good Friday (the day on which Christ *tasted death for every man*) she enjoins us to pray thus for them: “O merciful God, who hatest *nothing* that thou hast made, nor “wouldest the death of a *sinner*, but *RATHER* that he should be converted and live, have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and “Heretics.” 3. You indirectly sacrifice the feelings of humanity, and the honour of God’s perfections, to your unscriptural doctrine of grace, when you embrace the horrid idea of the ensured damnation of the heathens, for the injudicious pleasure of saying, “Why me! Why me!” and of teaching the “poor reprobated creatures,” while they sink into the bottomless pit, to say, “Why me! Why me!”—A dreadful *Why me* this, which is not less offensive to God’s justice, impartiality, goodness, and truth; than *YOUR Why me* is odious to his wisdom, equity, veracity, and holiness. 4. If Cain was culpable for intimating, that he had nothing to do with his brother, when he had just knocked him on the head; are they praiseworthy, who enjoy with peculiar delight, and recommend with uncommon glee, “doctrines of grace,” so called, which absolutely fix the *unavoidable* damnation of perhaps as many millions of their unborn fellow-creatures, as Abel had hairs upon his head? And do they mend the matter, when, to vindicate their severe opinions, they calmly wipe their mouth, and say, “We have nothing to do with the heathens.” That is, in plain English, “Our orthodoxy demands, that they should inevitably perish, if they do not explicitly believe in Christ crucified, of whom they never heard: nor do we care what becomes of them. Let them sink, provided *our* doctrines of grace stand.”

O my dear brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you, though yours is straitened towards the heathens, and those who do not engross the light of the *Sun of Righteousness*. Suffer the word of expostulation one moment more. Do not you detest the character of a stiff Pharisee? I know you do in the circumcised progeny: and why should you admire it in the baptized race? I am persuaded that you abhor the damnatory bull of those self-elected men of old, who from the height of their conceited orthodoxy, looked down upon their neighbours, and said, “*This people who know not (what we call) the law, are cursed.*” And will you exemplify their uncharitable posi-

unknown merits; I refer them to the Vindication of Mr. Wesley’s Minutes, Vol. i. pp. 50, 51, where that objection is answered.

tiveness by indirectly saying, *This people*, these myriads of men, *who know not* (what we call) THE GOSPEL, *are cursed*? Will ye become Christianized Pharisees, to countenance abandoned Antinomians?—No: the spark of candour in your breast is stirred, and almost sets fire to your prejudices. You are staggered, you are ready to yield to the force of truth? Some of you would do it even now, if you were not afraid that our doctrine of *free grace* obscures the *Christian dispensation*, and encourages the pernicious delusion of ANTICHRISTIAN MORALISTS. To convince you that your fear is groundless, permit me to expostulate with them before you.

SECTION XII.

An Address to Antichristian Moralists.

MORAL MEN, who ridicule the *Christian faith*; you suppose that your honesty counterbalances your sins, which by a soft name you call *foibles*; and for which you hope, that God will never punish you with hell torments. I do not desire to make the worst of things. I wish you were as good as you fancy yourselves to be. I wish you may have been as exact in *all* the branches of your duty as you pretend. I would rejoice, if the law of respectful obedience to your superiors, of courteous love to your equals, and of brotherly kindness to your inferiors, had always been fulfilled in your words and actions, in your looks and tempers. I am ready to congratulate you, if in all cases you have done to your *fellow-creatures* exactly as you would be done to, and never plunged once into the gulf of intemperance: but permit me to ask, If you have *fellow-creatures*, have you not a *Creator*? And if you have a Creator, do not reason and conscience command you to render him warm gratitude, cheerful praise, humble adoration, and constant obedience. But have you done this one year, one month, one day, *ONE hour* in *ALL* your lives?

Although you are so ready to make us understand that you are not as other men, adulterers, unjust, uncharitable, hypocrites, &c. are you entirely satisfied with your own goodness? Nay, if ever you looked into the *perfect law of liberty*, and searched your breasts with the *candle of the Lord*, can you say before the omniscient Searcher of hearts and spirits, that there is one of the commandments which you never broke in its spiritual meaning?

If upon second thoughts you cannot acquit yourselves; and if God's dignity as a Creator, his veracity as a Lawgiver, his wisdom as a Governor, his justice as a Judge, his holiness as a God, forbid him to

hold the guilty guiltless ; or to forgive them in a manner inconsistent with any one of his infinite perfections ; are you wise to despise an Advocate with Him,—a divine Prophet—an atoning Mediator ? Is it prudent in you to run *from* the city of refuge, to which you should flee with unabated swiftness ? Do you act a reasonable part when you take shelter under the dispensation of the Heathens, from the blessings that pursue, and from the light that surrounds you, in this Christian land ? If I may allude to the mysterious divisions of Solomon's temple : will ye obstinately remain in *the court of the Gentiles*, when you are graciously invited to enter into *the Holy place*, with sincere Jews : yea, into the *Holy of Holies*, with true Christians ? Think ye that because righteous Heathens are saved without the explicit knowledge of Christ, ye may be saved upon *their* plan ? If ye do, may the following remarks help you to see the unreasonableness of this conclusion !

1. Not to repeat the hints already given to *baptized Heathens*, I ask : Is not a grain of *sincere* love to truth the very beginning of a true conversion ? Is that man a *sincere* lover of light, who runs away from the light of the sun and moon, under pretence that he has the light of a star ? Do those people *sincerely* love money, who, when they are presented with *gold* and *silver*, throw it back to the face of their benefactor, because they have some *brass* ? And is that moralist a *sincere* lover of truth, who contemptuously rejects the *silver* truths of the Jewish dispensation, and the *golden* truths of the Christian Gospel, under pretence that he is an adept in “the religion of nature,” and has, what I beg leave to call, the *brass* of heathenism ?

2. You talk much of the *religion of nature* : but, should you not distinguish between the religion *natural* to man in his *unfallen* state, and that which is *natural* to him in his *fallen* condition ? Is not the regimen which is *natural* to the healthy, *unnatural*, and frequently destructive, to the sick ? If upright, innocent man needed not a spiritual physician, does it follow that depraved, guilty man can do without one ? Does not Heathenism allow the fall and degeneracy of man ? Have not some of the wisest Pagans seen, though darkly, their need both of a mediator and of a propitiatory sacrifice ? Do you think it prudent, so to depend upon your *self-righteousness*, as to trample under foot the Jewish and Christian Revelations, together with the discoveries of considerate Heathens ? Does your *wisdom* show itself to advantage, when it thus makes you sink below heathenism itself ?

3. No adult heathen was ever saved without the repentance of the contrite publican. “I am a guilty, helpless sinner, totally undone

if the mercy of him that made me do not extend itself to me : Great Author of my existence, pity, pardon, and save me for thy mercy's sake." Now, if you were brought to this genuine repentance, would you despise the light of revelation that recommends it, and leads on to farther attainments ? Think ye, that those, who *sincerely* rejoice in the dawn of day, will readily decry morning light ? Is it not therefore much to be feared, that Pharisaism and impenitency, stand in your way to Christianity, more than a mistaken respect for reason and truth ? Nay, does not *reason* bid you to assent to well-attested matters of fact ? And are not the Jewish and Christian Revelations so inseparably connected with notorious events, that it is less absurd to doubt the exploits of Alexander and Cesar, than to disbelieve the miracles of Moses and Jesus Christ ?

4. The Heathens, who were saved without the explicit knowledge of Christ, far from *despising* it as you do, *implicitly* desired it ; and those that were blessed with a ray of it, rejoiced in it, like Abraham.

That precious knowledge is offered to you ; and, shocking to say ! you reject it ! you make sport with it ! you pass jests upon it ! you call it imposture ! enthusiasm !—Oh ! how much *more tolerable* will it be for Pharisaic Heathens ; yea, for Chorazin and Bethsaida in the day of judgment, than for you, if you die under so fatal an error ! And how can ye flatter yourselves, that because righteous Heathens, who have but *one* talent, shall be saved in the *faithful* improvement of it ; you, who have *five*, shall be saved, though you bury *four* of them ?

"Oh ! but I, for one, improve the *fifth* : I am *moral*."—God forbid I should discountenance *morality* ! I value it next to piety : nay, *true* morality is the second branch of true piety. Nevertheless, this you must permit me to say : Your morality hath either pride, impenitency, and hypocrisy at the bottom ; or humility, sincerity, and truth. If the former ; your morality, like Jonah's gourd, has a worm at its root. When the sun of temptation shall shine warmly upon you, or when death shall lay his cold hand upon you, your morality will wither, and afford you neither safety nor comfort : but if it has sincerity and truth at the bottom ; and if you are faithful ; your little light will increase, the clouds raised by your prejudices will break, and you shall see the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, because, like Saul of Tarsus, you do not oppose the truth maliciously, but *ignorantly in unbelief*. And Oh ! may these pages convey to you the accents of that *Truth*, which shall make you free ! and may the gracious voice, which formerly thundered in the ears of the great Jewish moralist, the fierce opposer of the Christian

Gospel, *Saul ! Saul ! why persecutest thou me ?*—May that voice, I say, whisper to each of you, “ *Honestus ! Honestus ! why neglectest thou me ? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*—Jesus, who yet act a mediator’s part between my righteous Father and thy self-righteous soul. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks of my truth, and the stings of thy conscience.*—I am a Sun of righteousness and truth : wrap thyself in unbelief no more : let the beams of my grace penetrate thy prejudiced soul, and kindle redeeming love in thy frozen breast. Nor force me by an *obstinate and final* denial of me before men, to fulfil upon thee the most terrible of all my threatenings, by *denying thee also before my Father and his angels ; for, if YE, to whom my Gospel is FULLY preached, believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*”

SECTION XIII.

An Address to a penitent Mourner.

THOU deniest that loving Redeemer no longer, O thou poor, MOURNING PENITENT, who art ready to sink under the burden of thy sins, and longest to find rest for thy soul. The Lord, who pronounces thee *blessed*, says, *Comfort ye, Comfort ye my mourning people. By whom shall I comfort thee ?*—O that it were by me ! O that I were so happy as to administer one drop of Gospel cordial to thy fainting spirit ! Though I am less than the least of my Lord’s servants, he sends thee by me a Benjamin’s portion : be not above accepting it. Thou hast humbly received the *wounding truths* of the Gospel ; why shouldest thou obstinately reject the *healing ones* ? Thou hast eaten the bitter herbs of repentance : yea, thou feedest upon them daily, and ferrest them to all the sweets of sin : why then, O why should thy heart rise against the flesh and blood of the true paschal Lamb ? Why shouldest thou starve, when *all things are now ready* ? Why shouldest thou not believe the *whole truth*, as well as *one part* of it ? Will the word of God’s grace be more true ten years hence than it is now ? Is not Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ? If thy dull believing in God has already saved thee from thy vain conversation, and thy outward sins ; how much more will a cheerful believing in the Lord Jesus save thee into Christian righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost !

Do not begin to make excuse and say, “ I must not believe the joyous truths of the Gospel, till they are *first* powerfully applied to my soul. It is right, very right for thee, for all, never to rest short of

such an application. But how art thou to wait for it? In the way of duty, or out of it? Surely in the way of duty. And is it not thy duty no longer to *make God a liar*? Is it not thy bounden duty, as it is thy glorious privilege, to *set thy seal*, as thou canst, to the word of God's grace, as well as to the declaration of his justice? Does he not charge thee to *believe*, though it should be *in hope against hope*, the reviving record which he has given of his Son? Is not this the record: *That God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*?—That to as many as receive him—that is, to as many as believe on his name, he gives power to become the sons of God?—That God commendeth his love towards us, in that when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us “men, and for our salvation?”—That his blood, through faith on our part, cleanseth from all sin?—That he was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification?—And that he even now maketh intercession for us; bearing us up in the arms of his mercy; that we sink not into hell, and drawing to him, who justifieth the ungodly, all men, that renounce their ungodliness as thou hast done, and believe in Jesus as I want thee to do.

If it is a saying worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save even the chief of sinners, upon Gospel terms; he undoubtedly came to receive me and thee. Do not thou then foolishly excommunicate thyself from redeeming love. Away with thy unchristian, discouraging notions about absolute reprobation, præterition, non-election, &c. &c. Doubt not but thou art CONDITIONALLY elected, that is, chosen IN CHRIST to eternal salvation; yea, peculiarly chosen of God EXPLICITLY to believe in that Just One, who gave himself a ransom for all, and by his one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD.—Believe then thy election, and that of God. As certainly as Christ hung upon the cross, flesh of thy flesh, and bone of thy bone, thou art chosen to eternal salvation THROUGH sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Wilt thou then be powerfully saved here, and eternally saved hereafter? Only make thy calling and election sure, THROUGH SANCTIFICATION of the spirit; and make sanctification of the spirit sure, THROUGH BELIEF of the TRUTH.

Believe, as well as thou canst, this comfortable, this sanctifying truth, God so loved THE WORLD, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Be not afraid to conclude upon the divine record, that God loves thee, that Christ gave himself for THEE, and that the Holy Ghost will gloriously witness the Saviour's love to thy soul. And calmly, yet earn-

estly wait for a divine token, and an abiding sense of this love upon thy heart.

But, I repeat it, wait in faith :—wait, believing the truth :—wait, doing *thy* work ; and Christ will surely finish *his* own. He will save thee to the uttermost from sin and hell, into holiness and heaven. Remember, that as he once bled for thee, so he now *worketh in thee both to will and to do.*—Up, then, and be doing. WORK OUT *thy* own salvation with fear and trembling. Thou canst never do God's part, and he will never do *thine* : do not expect it ; nor let the song of “ finished salvation ” make thee conclude, that thou hast nothing to do. Even John Bunyan, in his “ *Heavenly Footman*,” cries out to the slothful, “ If thou wilt have heaven, thou must run for it.” And if thou dost not believe him, believe the Christians of the Lock-chapel, and of the Tabernacle, who, when they do justice to the second Gospel axiom, agree to “ *complain of spiritual sloth* in the following well-known hymn.

“ Our drowsy pow'rs, why sleep ye so ?
Awake, each *sluggish* soul.
Nothing has half thy *work to do*,
Yet nothing's half so dull, &c.”

The *God of truth* will warm thy heart in a rational manner, by the *truth*, which is the divine cordial generally used by the Comforter for that purpose. Thou must therefore take that cordial first. If thou art of *little faith*, there is no need that thou shouldst be of *little sense* also. Some *absurdly* refuse to believe the Gospel till they can feel it, if I may so speak, with their finger and thumb : so gross, so carnal are their ideas of truth ! And others think it their duty just to look at, or hear about the Gospel feast ; supinely waiting till all its rich blessings are forcibly thrust into their hearts, or at least conveyed there, without any endeavour of their own. “ When the truth shall be powerfully applied to my soul,” says a modern Thomas, “ I will believe, and not before.” Avoid this common mistake. If thou wert invited to a feast, and one said, “ You must not eat this rich food, unless it is *first* powerfully applied to your stomach ;” wouldst thou not reply, that thou must *first* eat it, in order to such an application ? Be as wise in spiritual things ; and remember that the way of relishing the *Gospel*, and *feeling* it to be *the power of God unto salvation*, is actually to believe it as we can, till the *Spirit of truth* makes us feel its *full* efficacy.

To *eat* or *drink* spiritually, and to *believe* or *receive* the truth, are Gospel terms of the same import. Come then, leave all thy excuses

to those, who have learned the lessons of *voluntary humility*. If the king offered thee a present, would it not be impertinent to make him stretch out his hand for one hour, under pretence that thou art not yet worthy of his bounty? And thinkest thou, that a similar conduct is not highly provoking to the King of kings? Does he not complain, *I called, and ye refused:—I stand at the door and knock:—All the day long have I stretched my hands to a gainsaying and disobedient people?* Come then, know thy distance; know thy place; know thy God: send thy absurd ceremoniousness back to Geneva: crucify thy guilty fears on Calvary; and make the best of thy way to Sion, *the mountain*, where God has made unto ALL people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines, of fat things full of marrow, of wines well refined.

There is room, says the Lord: draw them with the bands of a man; with arguments, threatenings, promises, expostulations, &c. *compel them to come in.* There is balm enough in Gilead. bread enough in my house, love enough in my heart, blood enough in the fountain that my Son has opened for sin, grace enough in the river that flows from my throne, truth enough in the Gospel of my grace, to heal, nourish, delight, transport a world of prodigal sons and daughters. And is there not enough for thee, who *fearest God?* for thee, to whom the word of this Christian, *this great salvation is sent?* Did not Christ himself break the bread of consolation for thee, when he said, *Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you?* Did he not offer thee the cup of salvation when he added, *This is the cup of the new testament in my blood shed for the remission of sins; drink ye ALL of it, and carry it into all nations—preach it, offer it, to every creature.* I bring thee this bread; it came down from heaven to give life to the world: it was surely consecrated in Gethsemane, and broken on Calvary, *for THEE, man, for THEE, woman, and for THY salvation.* Oh! if the fragments of perishing barley-bread were so to be gathered, that none of them might be lost; with what thankfulness shouldst thou receive the morsel which I set before thee! With what *hunger after righteousness* shouldst thou feast upon it! How shouldst thou try to relish every crumb, every particle of Gospel truth:—of the meat that endureth to everlasting life;—of the word of the Lord that abideth for ever.

Wonder at our Lord's condescension. Lest thou shouldst think that the word of his servants is insignificant, although it is the word of truth; he prays particularly *for them that shall believe on him through their word*; and he asks, *How is it that ye do not discern this time of love?* Yea, and why even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right, and

makes for your peace?—O ye, that have no money, come, buy, and eat, buy wine and milk: yea, eat and drink abundantly, O beloved, without money and without price. HEARKEN diligently unto me: EAT ye that which is good: Let your soul delight itself in fatness, in the richest Gospel truths. Whosoever will, let him come and take of the bread and water of life freely. Thus the Water and the Blood, the Spirit and the Word, sweetly agree to invite thee, to chide thy delays, to bid thee come and welcome to Christ, and to all the unsearchable riches of his grace.

If thou refusest this drop of Gospel cordial, this crumb of the bread of life; or if, after a faint attempt to take it, thou sinkest back into thy stupid unbelief, I beg leave to inquire into the reason. 1. Is it the hour and power of darkness? Is thy mind so confused, and thy heart so distracted, that in this moment thou canst neither consider nor welcome the truth? In this case, wait groaning: if thou canst not wait in hope, believing against hope, endeavour at least not to yield to despair. This storm will soon blow over; the time of refreshing will come; and the Lord, who permits thee to have fellowship with him in Gethsemane, will soon enable thee to triumph with him upon the mount.

Hast thou little or no appetite for the truth? In this case, I fear, thou still feedest upon husks and ashes, which spoil thy spiritual digestion; and I advise thee to exercise repentance; remembering that *to be carnally minded is death*, and that the promise is not made to the slothful; but to them who, *through faith, and patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory*—to them who, in taking up their cross, and denying themselves, inherit the Gospel promises.

8. Hast thou made an absurd covenant with unbelief, as Thomas? Art thou determined not to credit God's record, unless he come down to thy terms? Dost thou still confound faith with its first fruits, and God's work with thine own?—If this be thy case, how justly may the Lord suffer thee to go on moping, not only for a week, as the obstinate apostle did; but for years! And after all, when thou hast long dishonoured God, and tormented thyself by thy wilful unbelief; thou wilt be glad to do upon a death-bed what I want thee to do now. Being then surrounded by threatening billows, driven from thy carnal moorings, and tossed into true wisdom, thou wilt, without ceremony, venture upon the merits and blood of thy Saviour, and strive to enter, by wrestling faith, and agonizing prayer, into *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. Happy would it be for thee, in the mean time if thou wert not wiser in thy own conceit than seven men that can render a reason; if thou wert not obstinately bent upon nursing

thy curse; if thou didst confer with flesh and blood no more; and if, regarding the Gospel passport more than Solifidian embargoes, and the word of God more than the dispiriting speeches of faint-hearted spies, thou becamest one of the *BABES* to whom it is our heavenly Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom; one of the *VIOLENT* who take it by force. Thou wouldst soon find, that these two dispositions are as compatible as the two Gospel axioms; and, receiving the end of thy faith, thou wouldst soon, perhaps to-day, experience the astonishing force of Truth, and taste the ravishing powers of the world to come.

SECTION XIV.

An Address to Christian Believers.

YE taste those powers, happy believers, who see that God is love, boundless, free, redeeming, pardoning, comforting, sanctifying love in Jesus Christ. The more you believe it, the more you feel it. Do then always the work of faith, and you shall always abound in the patience of hope, and in the labour of love. You have believed the Truth, and it has made you free: *Rejoice then in the Truth: Worship the God of Truth: Triumph in Christ, the living Truth: and be daily baptized with the Spirit of Truth; Beware of enthusiasm; speak the words of soberness and Truth: God is not the author of nonsense.*

Sail with all possible care through the straits of Pharisaism and Antinomianism. Many, by deviating from the word, have almost made shipwreck of the faith. While some rest in high, Pharisaic forms, others catch at empty Solifidian shadows; or slide into the peculiarities of a censorious mysticism, harden themselves against the gentleness of Christ, and oppose a part of the truth as it is in Jesus: Embrace ye the whole: be valiant for the whole: recommend the whole: but, above all, bring forth the fruits of the whole.

Be steady: many who believed once as firmly as you do, that Christ was a sacrifice for sin, consider him now only as a martyr for the truth. And some, who were fully persuaded, that God is loving to every man while the day of salvation lasts, now can bear, yea, perhaps delight to hear it insinuated, that he is graceless and merciless to myriads of his unborn creatures. Be not thus carried about by a blast of vain doctrine, in opposition to the full tide of Scripture and Reason. Honour all men, and give double honour to those to whom it is due; but be not moved from your steadfastness either by names, or numbers. To judge of truth by popularity is absurd. Warm,

zealous men, who can draw the attention, and work upon the passions of the populace, will always be popular; but popularity, you know, is no proof that any man's principles are unexceptionable. Go not then by that deceitful rule. When Truth is at stake, mind popular applause as little as a siren's song; and regard a Bonner's rack as little as a Nebuchadnezzar's dulcimer. Be cast into the furnace of persecution with *two* companions, rather than bow with *thousands* to the most shining, the most celebrated, and the richest image of error. If your two companions forsake you, Oh! do not forsake the Truth. Turn not your back upon her, when she wants you most. Run not away from her colours, when the enemy pours in like a flood. If she be driven out of the professing church, follow her to the wilderness,—and, if need be, to the den of lions. There the God of Daniel will be with you: and from thence he will bring you out: for God will stand by the Truth, and she will prevail at last. *Buy her* therefore at any rate; *buy her*, though you should give your last mite of wealth, and your last scrap of reputation for her: *and sell her not*, though you should gain the whole world by the unhappy bargain.

These things, O men of God, have I written unto you concerning them that, by fair shows of spirituality and voluntary humility, seduce you into Pharisaism or Antinomianism. But the anointing, which you have received of God, abideth in you. (since you have not been seduced) and it is truth, and is no lie; abide in it therefore. Err not from the Truth. Walk in the Truth. Do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth. And, as you have purified your souls by obeying the Truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that his love extend itself particularly to your opponents: love them, love one another with a pure heart fervently. You will often be obliged to part with peace in order to maintain truth; but you never need part with love. Be you herein followers of Christ and St. Paul. You know that the Pharisees, the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the devil himself, would gladly have made peace with those two champions of the truth, upon the scandalous terms of betraying and giving her up. But St. Paul had not so learned Christ, and our Lord scorned to deny himself the Truth, and to worship the father of lies. See how calmly, how lovingly, how resolutely they fight this good, this bloody fight of faith. Volumes of invectives and calumnies have already been thrown out against them: and now, reproving their persecutors, and yet praying for them, they go and meet bonds and prisons, stocks and scourges, the provoking taunt and the cruel mocking, the bloody sword and the ignominious cross. And how many

stand by them in their extremity? Have ye forgotten the amazing number? *They ALL forsook him and fled.*—*ALL men forsook me, I pray God it may not be laid to their charge.* And, astonishing! Judas, Peter, and Demas, led the van.—O Jesus, stand by our weakness, and we will stand by thy truth. Thou sayst, *will ye also go away?* And to whom should we go, gracious Lord? *Hast thou not the words of Truth, the words of everlasting life?* Art thou not *the light of the world and the light of men?* Our light and our life? Could all the *ignes fatui* in the professing world; could even all the *stars* in thy church, supply the want of thy light to our souls? No, Lord; be then our sun and shield for ever. Visit the earth again, thou uncreated Sun of Righteousness and truth: hasten thy second advent: Thy kingdom come! Shine without a cloud! Scatter the last remains of error's night! Kindle our minds into pure truth! our hearts into perfect love! our tongues into ardent praise! our lives into flaming obedience!

Bold may we wax, exceeding bold,
No more to Error's ways conform,
Nor shrink the hardest *Truths* t' unfold,
But more than meet the gathering storm.

Adverse to earth's erroneous throng,
May each now turn his fearless face;
Stand as an iron pillar strong,
And steadfast as a wall of brass.

Give us thy might, thou God of power,
Then let or men, or fiends assail;
Strong in thy strength, we'll stand a tower,
Impregnable to earth or hell.

AN APPENDIX

To prevent Objections.

TO plead for *Error* in an *Essay on Truth* would be preposterous. If I have done it, it has been inadvertently ; and I shall be thankful to any of my readers, who will be at the trouble to set me right. But I once more beg forward disputants not to produce assertions and invectives, instead of arguments and well-applied scriptures ; and not to wiredraw the controversy by still urging objections, which I have already directly or indirectly answered ; unless they show, that such answers are insufficient ; that my arguments are inconclusive ; and the scriptures I quote misapplied. Two of those objections, however, deserve a more direct and full answer.

I. Should it be said, “ I puzzle people by asserting that there can “ be any other saving faith but the *Christian* faith ; and any other “ object of saving faith but *Christ crucified* ; ” I reply, that though *Christ crucified* is the capital object of *my* faith, I dare not admit the contracted notions that the Solifidians have of faith : because if I did, I should subscribe to the necessary damnation of three parts of my fellow-sinners out of four ; and reject Christ’s word, under pretence of exalting his person. Take a few more instances of it.

Did not our Lord himself say to his disciples, *Have faith in God* ; distinguishing that faith from faith in himself as mediator, John xvii. 3. ? Does not St. Paul declare, that as *believing God was imputed to Abraham for righteousness* ; so it shall be imputed to us, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ? Do I “ forge ” the following scriptures ? *The righteousness of God is revealed from FAITH to FAITH—According to the PROPORTION of faith—According as God hath dealt the MEASURE of faith.—If I have told you of EARTHLY things, and ye BELIEVE not ; how shall ye BELIEVE, if I tell you of HEAVENLY things ?—And can we read Heb. xi. without seeing that the faith there described is more general than the faith which characterizes the Christian dispensation ? By what art can we make it appear, that Christ crucified was the object of the faith of those believers, of whom the apostle says, By faith Noah, moved with fear, built an ark :—By faith Isaac blessed Jacob AND ESAU (the supposed reprobate) concerning things to come :—By faith Jacob blessed the sons*

*of Joseph :—By faith Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones :—By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not when she had received the spies? If you insinuate with respect to Rahab, that Joshua sent the spies whom she entertained, and that they informed her that Joshua was a type of Christ crucified; will you not render your “orthodoxy” as ridiculous, as if you rested it upon the frivolous difference there is between *if* and *if*? Mr. B. cannot show, that the apostle ever distinguished between a Jewish *IF* and a Christian *IF*; but I can quote chapter and verse, when I assert, that he clearly distinguishes between Jewish and Christian *faith*. For, not to transcribe Heb. viii. and x. does he not say, Gal. iii. 23. BEFORE FAITH (i. e. before Christian faith) came, we were kept under the law, i. e. under the Jewish dispensation, and the obscurer faith peculiar to it: nor was this a damnable state; for St. Paul begins the next chapter by telling us, that The HEIR, as long as he is a CHILD, differeth nothing from a SERVANT, though he be LORD OF ALL; but is under tutors and governors, till the time appointed of the Father: Even so we, when we were children (when we were under the Jewish dispensation) were in bondage under the elements of this world. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we [children differing nothing from servants] might receive the adoption of sons, i. e. the privileges of sons that are of age, and are no longer under tutors and governors.—For after that (Christian) FAITH is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster, for we are all the (emancipated) children of God by FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. Gal. iii. 25, 26. Is it not evident, from the comparing of these passages, that the faith of Jews constituted them children of God, but such children as, in general, differed nothing from servants,—such children as were in a state of nonage and bondage? Whereas Christian faith (emphatically called *faith*) by its superior privileges, introduces true Christians into the glorious liberty of the adult sons of God! Before we can overthrow this doctrine, must we not, to use St. Peter’s words, wrest our beloved brother Paul’s words, so as to overthrow the FAITH of some, yea, of all the Jews that lived before *faith* came, i. e. before Christ brought believers from mount Sinai to mount Sion; from the earthly Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her children, to the new Jerusalem, which is free, and is the mother of us all—that stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free, and are not entangled again with the yoke of bondage?*

The difference between the privileges of the Jewish, and those of the Christian faith and dispensation, is still more clearly described,

2 Cor. iii. There, the Christian dispensation (called the *ministration of the Spirit*, because the *promise of the Spirit* is its great privilege, see John vii. 39.) is opposed to the Jewish dispensation, which the apostle calls the *ministration of condemnation*, because it appointed no particular sacrifices for penitents guilty of adultery, idolatry, murder, blasphemy, &c. and absolutely doomed them to die. This severe dispensation, says St. Paul, *was glorious, though it is done away: much more that which remaineth* (the Christian dispensation) *exceedeth in glory*.—Again, *Moses put a typical vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end, &c.* But we (Christians) all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory. What a privilege! And how many nominal Christians live below it; yea, below the privileges of the very Heathens!

This, however, is the *one faith* of true Christians, who have the same spirit of faith. It is *one*, in its great object, *God manifest in the flesh*—*one*, in its great promise, *the promise of the Father, or the kingdom in the Holy Ghost*—*one*, in its new commandment, brotherly, universal love, that perfects believers in *one*, and makes them partakers of so great salvation.—This is the faith, which St. Paul calls *the faith of God's elect*, i. e. the faith of Christians, who are chosen above Jewish believers to see the glory of the Lord with open face, when Jewish believers see it only darkly through a vail: This very faith he calls, immediately after, the faith common to all Christians, *To Titus, my own son after the common faith*, Tit. i. 1, 4. With an eye to this faith he likewise names *Timothy, his own son in the FAITH*,—*which is in Christ Jesus*. A faith this, whereby Timothy, who was a Jewish believer from a child, was made a partaker of Christ the great (i. e. the Christian) salvation:—A faith, which St. Peter calls *precious faith*, and St. Jude, *most holy faith*; indirectly comparing it to the *most holy place* in the temple:—A faith, which Christ calls *my faith*, Rev. ii. 13. and *faith that is in me*, Acts xxvi. 18.—A faith this, far superior to the faith of the noble Jewish believers in Berea, who so candidly searched the Scriptures, when they had heard St. Paul preach,—and very far exceeding the candid disposition of those sincere Heathens at Corinth, concerning whom our Lord said to St. Paul,* *I have much people in this city*. If the reader divests himself of pre-

* I prefer this sense to that of the Calvinists, not only because unconditional election to eternal glory appears to me an unscriptural doctrine; but because the apostle, having named the sins in which *all wicked* Heathens lived, says to the Corinthians, *Not such were you ALL, but such were some of you*; intimating that *others* were of those righteous people, concerning whom our Lord speaks when he says, *Inquire who is worthy*. Let it be ob-

judices, I hope that, instead of calling the doctrine of the Gospel dispensations, and the degrees of faith belonging to them, a "*novel chimera*," he will embrace, receive it as a *truth*, which leads to a thousand others.

II. Some of my opponents, who find it easier to pass a jest than to answer an argument, will probably think, that to beat me and the doctrine of dispensations out of the field of truth, they need only laugh at my "*inventing*" different sorts of faith "*by the dozen*."

To nip this witticism in the bud, I declare ONCE MORE: That I make no more difference between the faith of a righteous Heathen, and the faith of a father in Christ, than I do between daybreak and meridian light: that the light of a sincere Jew is as much one with the light of a sincere Christian, as the light of the sun in a cold, cloudy day in March, is one with the light of the sun in a fine day in May;—And that the difference between the saving faith peculiar to the sincere disciples of Noah, Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ, consists in a variety of *degrees*, and not in a diversity of *species*; saving faith under all dispensations agreeing in the following essentials: 1. It is begotten by the revelation of some saving truth presented by free grace, impressed by the Spirit, and received by the believer's prevented free agency: 2. It has the same original cause in all, that is, the mercy of God in Jesus Christ: 3. It *actually* saves all, though in various degrees: 4. It sets all upon *working righteousness*; some bearing fruit *thirty*, some *sixty*, and some a *hundred fold*: And 5. Through Christ it will bring all that do not make shipwreck of it, to one or another of the *many mansions* which our Lord is gone to prepare in heaven for his *believing, obedient* people.

III. Should it be objected, that "The doctrine of *this* Essay confounds faith and works;" to what I have said on this head in the preceding Checks, I add: 1. There is an essential difference between the holy faith of Adam in a state of innocence, and the justifying, sanctifying faith of a penitent sinner: for Adam *only* stood and worked by faith in God as *Creator*; but we rise, stand, and work, *chiefly* by faith in God as *Redeemer* and *Sanctifier*. 2. Adam worked upon the terms of the *first* covenant, which requires innocence and perfect obedience; and we work upon the terms of the *second*, which, for Christ's sake, admits the sincere obedience of penitential faith. Here is then no mixing of the covenants, no confounding of faith and

served, however, that we do not rest our doctrine of free grace upon this or upon any one scripture brought in by the bye, and rather by way of illustration than of proof. We have passages in abundance that are *full* to the point.

works ; but only a vindication of the works of faith, and defending the faith that works by love. 3. St. Augustine, the favourite father of the Solifidians, wrote a Treatise (*De fide et operibus*) upon faith and works, in the 21st chapter of which he has these words : “ By believing in God with a right faith, by worshipping and knowing him, we are so far benefited (*ut et bene vivendi ab illo sit nobis auxilium, et si peccaverimus ab illo indulgentiam* MEREAMUR) as to be assisted by him to live well, and to obtain of him” (for I must not literally translate the heretical work *mereamur*) “ a pardon, if we have sinned.”—And chap. 23, he adds, “ *Inseparabilis est bona vita a fide quæ per dilectionem operatur : imo vera ea ipsa est bona vita* : A good life is inseparable from the faith which works by love ; nay, that faith itself is a good life.” Had I spoken so unguardedly, there would be just room for raising the objection which I prevent ; but I have carefully distinguished between faith and works ; representing faith as the *beating of the heart*, and works as the *pulses* caused thereby ; and holding forth faith as the *root*, and works as the *fruit* of evangelical obedience.

IV. If some readers think that my views of *Truth* are *singular*, I reply, that when I have Reason and Scripture on my side, I am not afraid of *singularity*. However, as I should be glad to obviate even this objection, I shall present the reader with the sentiments of two of the most judicious divines of the last century, Mr. Flavel and Mr. Goodwin.

Mr. Flavel says in his *Discourse on Mental Errors*, “ Truth* is the proper object, the natural and pleasant food of the understanding: *Doth not the ear* (that is, the understanding by the ear) *try words, as the mouth tasteth meat?*—The minds of all that are not wholly immersed in sensuality, spend their strength in the laborious search and pursuit of Truth.—Answerable to the sharpness of the mind’s appetite, is the fine edge of pleasure and delight which it feels in the discovery and acquisition of Truth.—If Archemedes, upon the discovery of a mathematical truth, was so ravished, that he cried out, *εὕρηκα, εὕρηκα, I have found it, I have found it* ; what pleasure must the discovery of a divine Truth give to a sanctified soul ! *Thy words were found of me*, says Jeremiah, *and I did eat them ; and thy word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.*—Truth lies deep,” *Veritas in puteo*, “ as the rich veins of gold do ; if we will get the treasure, we must not only *beg* but *dig* also.—We are not to take up with what lies uppermost, and next at hand upon the surface.—Be

* I produce this as an *EXTRACT*, and not as a *continued quotation*.

ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.—It is a very great judgment of God to be given over to an erroneous mind. For the understanding being the leading faculty, as that guides, the other powers of the soul follow; as horses in a team follow the forehorse. Now how sad and dangerous a thing is this, for Satan to ride the forehorse, and guide that which is to guide the life of man! That is a dreadful, spiritual, judicial stroke of God, which we read of Rom. i. 26.—2 Thess. ii. 13. *Because they received not the love of the Truth, God gave them up to strong delusions.* They are justly plagued with error, that slight truth.—Besides, what shame and trouble must it be to the zealous promoters of errors, not only to cast away their own time and strength, but also to ensnare and allure the souls of others into the same, or worse mischief! for though God may save and recover you, those that have been misled by you, may perish.”

Mr. Goodwin thus confirms Mr. Flavel's noble testimony, in the preface to his *Redemption Redeemed*, “TRUTH is for the understanding, and the understanding for Truth—Truth especially in things of supernatural concernment, the knowledge whereof faceth eternity, &c. being nothing else (interpretatively) but GOD himself prepared, of and by himself, for a beatifical union with the understanding, and from hence, with the heart and affections of men; ERROR, in things of high import, can be nothing else but SATAN, contriving and distilling himself into a notion, or impression likely to be admitted by the understanding, under the appearance, and in the name of *Truth*, into union with itself, and by means hereof, into union with the hearts of men.—All error (of that kind I now speak of) being seated in the understanding, secretly and by degrees infuseth a proportionable malignity into the will and affections, and occasioneth unholy dispositions. Error is the great troubler of the world. It is that fountain of death, that sendeth out all those streams of sin, which overflow the earth.—Why do men so universally walk in ways of oppression, deceit, drunkenness, uncleanness, envy, pride, &c. but because they judge such ways as these, (all circumstances considered) more desirable to them, than ways of a contrary import? And what is this, but a most horrid error and mistake, the result of those lying apprehensions concerning God, wherewith men willingly suffer their minds to be corrupted even to spiritual putrefaction?—Neither could the devil have touched Adam or Eve but by the mediation of some erroneous notion or other, concerning God.”—And in his dedicatory epistle to the University of Cambridge he hath this fine thought,

which I address to my readers : “ If you condemn, who will justify ? Only God’s eldest daughter, TRUTH, has one mightier than *you* on her side, who will justify in due time, though you should condemn her ; and will raise her up from the dead the third day, in case you shall slay her.”

V. “ By granting, that people, who are under dispensations inferior to Christianity in its state of perfection, may have a degree of saving faith, although they have not yet the luminous faith of Christian believers, you damp the exertions of *seekers* ; and invite them to settle, as most dissenters do, in a lukewarm, Laodicean state, short of assurance and the *kingdom of God*, which consists not only in *righteousness*, but in *peace and joy by the Holy Ghost*.”

If this objection could not be answered, I would burn my Essay ; for I had much rather it should feed my fire, than the Laodicean spirit, which is already so predominant in the Church. But, that this new difficulty ■ by no means unanswerable, will appear, I hope, by the following observations.

1. Judicious Mr. Baxter, by a variety of strong arguments, shows, that to represent assurance, or the kingdom of God in the Holy Ghost, as essential to all true faith ; and promiscuously to shut up, in a state of damnation, all those to whom that *kingdom* is not yet *come with power*, is both cruel and unscriptural. See the arguments in his *Confession of Faith*, from p. 189 to 214.

2. Ought we to keep from those, who sincerely seek the kingdom of God, the comfort that the Gospel allows them ? Are not *they that seek the Lord* commanded to *rejoice* ? And how can they do it, if the *wrath of God abideth on them*, as it certainly does on all absolute unbelievers ? Did not our Lord and St. Peter speak in a more evangelical strain, when they said to sincere seekers, *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom of grace*, as well as that of glory ?—*The promise of the kingdom in the Holy Ghost, is unto you and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call to believe explicitly in Jesus Christ* ?

3. When Joshua urged the Israelites to cross Jordan, would he have done right, if he had made them believe that they were still in Egypt, and had not yet taken one true step towards Canaan ? Did he not encourage them to go up, and to possess the good land by the very consideration, which my objector supposes would have made them sit down in the wilderness ? Nay, did not those, who had already taken possession of the kingdoms of Og and Sihon, on the other side Jordan, cross that river first, and nobly lead the van, when their brethren went on from conquering to conquer ? And why

should not spiritual Israelites, who turn their back upon spiritual Egypt, and seek the kingdom of God, be led on *from faith to faith*, in the same comfortable manner?

4. It is trifling to say, “*Dead Dissenters, and the formal Scotch clergy, preach up a faith short of Christian assurance, and therefore such a faith is a dangerous chimera;*” for if they preach it in an unguarded, or in a careless manner, to set aside, and not to illustrate the doctrine of *Christian faith*, they do the devil’s work, and not the works of evangelists; what wonder is it then, that such preaching should lull their congregations asleep?—Again, if we ought not to give up the doctrine of *sincere obedience and good works*, though our opponents cry out perpetually, “It is the doctrine of all the carnal clergy in the kingdom:”—and if it be our duty to maintain the doctrine of the Trinity, though Dr. Priestley and all the Unitarians say with great truth, “It is the doctrine of the superstitious Papists;” how absurd is it to urge, that our doctrine, concerning a faith inferior to the faith of assurance, is false, merely because the objector says, that this part of our doctrine is held by all the *sleepy Dissenters*? Might we not, at this rate, be also ashamed of the doctrine of the divine Unity, which the Socinians, the Jews, and even the Turks, hold as well as we?

5. Are there not many pious and judicious ministers in the churches of England and Scotland, as well as among the Dissenters, who dare not countenance the present revival of the power of godliness, chiefly because they hear us sometimes unguardedly assert that none have any faith, but such as have the faith of assurance; and that the wrath of God actually abides on all those who have not that faith? If we warily allowed the faith of the inferior dispensations, which such divines clearly see in the Scriptures, and feel in themselves, would not their prejudices be softened, and their minds prepared to receive what we advance in defence of the faith of assurance?

6. If it be urged, that the Spirit of God witnesses to all sincere seekers of the kingdom in the Holy Ghost, that they are in a damnable state, till they feel the pardoning *love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them*; I demand proof; I deny the fact, and assert, that the divine Spirit can no more bear witness to an *accepted*, mourning Cornelius, that he is *not accepted* in any sense, than it can give testimony to a palpable contradiction. The truth is, our unbelieving fears and awakened hearts are very prone to surmise the worst, and we are very apt to take their surmisings for divine impressions, even when we bring forth fruits worthy of repent-

ance. I doubt not but St. Paul himself, in his agony of penitential grief, when he spent three days and three nights in fasting and prayer, had many such gloomy, despairing thoughts : but they were certainly lying thoughts, as well as those which David wisely checks in some of his Psalms. Who will dare to say, that Ananias found the apostle in a *dammable* state, though he found him without a sense of sin forgiven, as appears from the direction which he gave him, *Arise, why tarriest thou ? Wash away thy sins calling upon, and consequently BELIEVING in, the name of the Lord ?*

7. My objector's argument is as much levelled at St. Paul's doctrine as at my Essay, *Men and Brethren*, &c. said he to his audience at Antioch, *whosoever among you FEARETH God, to you is the word of THIS SALVATION sent*, Acts xiii. 26. But none of the *pious* hearers, whom he thus addressed, were unwise enough to reply, "Thou *acknowledgest that we fear God ; and David says, BLESSED is the man that FEARETH the Lord : now, if we fear him, and are blessed, we are already in a state of salvation, and therefore need not 'THIS SALVATION' which thou preachest. If we see our way by the candle of Moses, as thou intimatest, what need is there that the Sun of righteousness should arise upon us with healing in his wings ?*" I demand proof therefore, that men, who *fear God* in our day, are more ready to draw pernicious inferences from the doctrine of the dispensations, than they were in St. Paul's time.

8. The objections which I answer, may with equal propriety be urged against St. Peter's doctrine. Acts ii. 5. and x. 7. we read of *DEVOUT men out of every nation under heaven, and of a DEVOUT soldier, that waited continually on Cornelius, who himself feared God, wrought righteousness, and was accepted—with all his house.* By Acts xi. 9, 14. it evidently appears, that though Cornelius *was cleansed by God himself, yet he must send for Peter, who was to tell him words, whereby he and all his house SHOULD BE SAVED, i. e. should become partakers of the GREAT salvation revealed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.* But although St. Peter began his discourse by acknowledging that his *pious hearers were accepted with God*, none of the congregation said, *Well, if we are accepted, we are already in a state of salvation, and therefore we need not hear words whereby we shall be saved.* On the contrary, they all *BELIEVED the word of THIS fuller salvation ; for the Holy Ghost fell on ALL them that heard the word, and St. Paul informs us, that we receive the Spirit by the hearing of FAITH.* Compare Acts x. 44. with Gal. iii. 2. and John vii. 39. It is plain, from this account, that no preaching was ever attended with a more *universal* blessing, and that no discourse was ever more instrumental in convey-

ing to all the power of the faith of assurance, than that very sermon which the apostle began by intimating, that his hearers were already *accepted*, according to an inferior dispensation. Hence it is evident, that the doctrine we maintain, if it be properly guarded, far from having a *necessary* tendency to lull people asleep, is admirably calculated to excite every penitent to faith, prayer, the improvement of their talents, and the *perfecting of holiness*.

9. May we not sufficiently guard the *Christian* dispensation, by constantly affirming: (1.) That all *Christian* believers have now the *witness in themselves*:—(2.) That those, who have it not, either never had *Christian faith*, which is emphatically called *faith* in the Gospel, (see Acts xiv. 27.) or, that they know only the *baptism of John*; or, that, with the unsettled Galatians, they are actually *fallen from grace*, i. e. from the *Christian* dispensation: and now live *under the law*, i. e. in the darkness of the *Jewish* dispensation; supposing they are not quite departed from God by indulging known sin.—(3.) That if they do not press after the faith of assurance, they are in the utmost danger of losing their talent of grace; like the young man whom Jesus loved, and who, nevertheless, went away sorrowful, when he was unwilling to give up all, and follow Jesus without reserve; or like those thousands of Israelites, *whom the Lord saved out of the land of Egypt, and whom he afterward destroyed, when they believed not the word, by which they were to be saved into the land of promise*? Jude 5.

10. Not to mention all the arguments, by which the zealous Puritans defended the doctrine of assurance in the last century, and those by which the Methodists prove its *necessity* in our days; is not the first argument used in my address to the antichristian moralist, p. 278, sufficient, if it be properly managed, to enforce the absolute *necessity* of rising to higher dispensations, when God calls us to it? If queen Vashti lost her crown for *refusing to come to the royal banquet at the king's commandment*:—If those, who *begged to be excused* when they were invited to the Gospel feast, were at last dreadfully punished:—If St. Paul says to loitering believers who are backward to go on to perfection, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so GREAT salvation, which at FIRST began to be spoken by the Lord*:—Nay, if Christ himself threatens to *spue lukewarm, slothful Laodiceans out of his mouth*; do we want even *terrifying* arguments to lash the consciences of those carnal professors, who, hoping they are perfectly safe in their *low* attainments, despise *higher* dispensations, and *bury their talent of grace, till it be taken from them, and given to those who best improve their own*? To conclude,

11. You are afraid that the doctrine of this Essay will make "*Seekers*" rest in Laodicean lukewarmness ; but permit me to observe, that the *Seekers* you speak of are either forward hypocrites, or sincere penitents :—If they are *forward hypocrites*, preaching to them the *faith of assurance* will never make them either humble or sincere. On the contrary, they will probably catch at an *election*, and then at an *assurance* of their own making ; and so they will profess to have the faith for which you contend, when in fact they have only the name and notion of it. The religious world swarms with instances of this kind,—If, on the other hand, the *seekers* for whom you seem concerned, are *sincere penitents* ; far from being hurt, they will be greatly benefited by our doctrine : for it will at once keep them from chilling, despairing fears ; and from false Crispian comforts ; the two opposite extremes, into which upright, unwary mourners are most apt to run. Thus our doctrine, instead of being dangerous to sincere seekers, will prove a scriptural clew, in following which they will happily avoid the gloomy haunts of *Pharisaic* despair, and the enchanted ground of *Antinomian* presumption.

SECOND APPENDIX,

CONTAINING,

1. TEN MORE ARGUMENTS TO PROVE, THAT ALL MEN UNIVERSALLY, IN THE DAY OF THEIR VISITATION, HAVE SOME GRACIOUS POWER TO BELIEVE SOME SAVING TRUTH.—AND,
2. AN ANSWER TO THREE MORE OBJECTIONS.

BEING conscious that I cannot be too careful, and guarded, in writing upon so important and delicate a subject as that of the preceding Essay ; I once more take up the pen to explain, strengthen, and guard the doctrine that it contains.

I. I have said, p. 227, that *Faith* (considered in general) is *believing heartily* ; I add, *and sometimes it may signify a power to believe heartily*. For, as God gives to all the heathens in the day of their visitation, a *power to believe heartily that God is*, &c. indulging them with gracious calls and opportunities to use that power ; we may say, that he gives them *the faith* of their dispensation. Nevertheless all the heathens have not *that* faith : for many obstinately bury their talent, till at last it is taken from them.

As this doctrine of *faith* entirely subverts the doctrine of *finished damnation*, which is so closely connected with the doctrines of *absolute election*, and *finished salvation* : and as a Calvinist clergyman, who has seen part of this Essay, assures me that it shall be taken notice of ; I beg leave to add the following arguments to those which I have produced, Section 1st. to prove, that *faith is not* the work of God in the sense of our adversaries, and that in the day of salvation, through *the free gift which is come upon all men*, we have all *some* gracious power to believe *some* saving truth.

1. If *faith* be the work of God in the same sense in which the creation is his performance, when Christ *marvelled at the Centurion's faith*, he marvelled, that God should be able to do what he pleases, or that a man should do what he can no more help doing, than he can hinder the world from existing. That is, he marvelled at what was not at all marvellous : and he might as well have wondered that a ton should outweigh an ounce.

2. When God invites *EVERY creature in all the world* to believe, (Mark xvi. 15.) if he denies *MOST* of them power so to do, he insults over their wretched impotence, and acts a part which can hardly be

reconciled with sincerity. What would the world think of the king, if he perpetually invited *all* the Irish poor over to England to partake of his royal charity, and took care that *most* of them should *never* meet with any vessels to bring them over, but such as would be sure to founder in the passage?

3. When our Lord endeavoured to shame the Pharisees for their unbelief, he said, *John came to you, &c. and ye believed him not, but the publicans and harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe.* But if faith is the work of God in the sense of our adversaries, was it any shame to the Pharisees, that God would not do *his own* work? Had they any more reason to blush at it, than we have to redden, because God does not give us wings and fins, as he does to birds and fishes?

4. To suppose that Christ assiduously preached the Gospel to the inhabitants of Capernaum, whilst all the time he withheld from them power to believe it, and that afterward he appointed them a *more intolerable* damnation for not believing:—To suppose this, I say, is to cast the most horrible reflection upon the Lamb of God. But if it be allowed, that those obstinate unbelievers will *justly* be sent into a *more* dreadful hell, for having buried to the end their talent of power to believe in their *stronger* light; is it not reasonable to suppose, that those who shall go to a *less* intolerable hell, will also be sent there for having finally refused to use their talent of power to believe in their *weaker* light?

5. Although Christ positively says, that men shall be damned for their unbelief: (See John iii. 18. Mark xvi. 16.) yet, some of our adversaries deny it; being deservedly ashamed of representing our Lord as damning myriads of men for not doing what is absolutely impossible. Hence they tell us that reprobates shall be damned only for their *sins*. But this unscriptural contrivance does not mend the matter; for I have shown, Section vii. that bad works, or sins, *necessarily* flow from unbelief. Now, unbelief being nothing but the absence of faith; God, by absolutely withholding all saving faith, *necessarily* causes all unbelief; and unbelief, by *necessarily* causing all sin, *necessarily* causes also all damnation. For he that absolutely withholds all light, *necessarily* causes all darkness, and of course all the works of darkness. Thus “*the doctrines of grace*” (so called) that seem to rear their *graceful* head to heaven, end in the *graceless*, venomous tail of *finished* damnation. “*Desinet in piscem mulier formosa superne!*”

6. The design of the Gospel with regard to God, is evidently to *extol his grace*, and *clear his justice*. Now, if an absolute decree

of preterition, or limited redemption, hinders a vast majority of mankind from believing to salvation, both those ends of the Gospel are entirely defeated in all that perish: for God, by passing by the reprobated culprits thousands of years before they were born, and by withholding every dram of *saving grace* from them, shows himself an *absolutely graceless* Creator to them all. Nor does this opinion less horribly impeach God's *Justice* than his *Grace*; for it represents him as judicially sentencing men to eternal torments, merely for the sin of a man whom most of them never heard of; or, which is all one, for the *necessary, unavoidable, pre-ordained* consequences of that sin.

7. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, takes particular care to clear God's justice with respect to the condemnation of the wicked, *that every mouth may be stopped*—and (*εἰς τὸ εἰπεῖν*) *that they may be without excuse*. But the scheme which I oppose, instead of leaving men *ἀναπολογητὰς* without excuse, opens their mouths, and fills them with the best apology in the world, "*Absolute necessity, and complete impossibility, caused by another before we were born:*" an apology this, which no candid person can ever object to.

8. Agreeably to St. Paul's doctrine our Lord observes, that the man sentenced to be cast into outer darkness for *not having on a wedding garment*, was speechless. But if the Crispian doctrines of grace be true, might not that man with the greatest propriety, have said to the Master of the feast, while the executioners bound him hand and foot, "To all eternity I shall impeach thy justice, O thou partial judge; thou appointest me the hell of hypocrites, merely because *I have not on a wedding garment*, which thou hast from all eternity purposely kept from me, under the strong lock and key of thine irreversible decrees? Is this the manner in which thou judgest the world in righteousness?"

9. The parable of the *talents*, and that of the *pounds*, decide the question. The wicked and slothful servants, whose destruction they inform us of, are not condemned because their master was "hard and austere," but because the one had *buried his talent* of power in the earth, and the other had *hid his pound* of grace in a napkin manufactured at Laodicea.

10. If salvation depends upon faith, and if God never gives reprobates power to *believe in the light that enlightens every man*, and a sufficiency of means so to do; it follows, that he never gives them any *personal* ability to escape damnation; but only to secure and increase their damnation; and thus he deals far more hardly with them than he did with devils. For Satan and his angels were all *personally* put in a state of initial salvation, and endued with a *personal*

ability to do that, on which their eternal salvation depended. To suppose therefore, that a majority of the children of Adam, who are born sinful without any *personal* fault of their own, and who can say to the *incarnate* Son of God, Thou art flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood, and bone of our bone ;—to suppose, I say, that a vast majority of these favoured creatures have far less favour shown them, than Beelzebub himself had, is so *graceless*, so *unevangelical* a doctrine, that one might be tempted to think, it is *ironically* called the *doctrine of grace*; and to suspect, that its defenders are styled “*evangelical ministers*” by way of *burlesque*.

From the preceding arguments I conclude, that, when it is said in the Scriptures, people *COULD NOT believe*, this is to be understood, either of persons whose day of grace was over, and who of course were justly *given up to a reprobate mind*, as the men mentioned in Rom. i. 21, 28. or of persons who, by not using their one talent of power to believe the obvious truths belonging to a lower dispensation, absolutely incapacitated themselves to believe the deep truths belonging to Christianity.

II. Although I flatter myself that the preceding arguments guard the doctrine of *free grace* against the attacks of those who indirectly contend for *free wrath*; I dare not yet conclude this Appendix. Still fearful lest some difficulty unremoved should prejudice the candid reader against what appears to me to be the truth, I beg leave to intrude upon his patience, by answering three more plausible objections to the doctrine of *this Essay*.

OBJ. VI. “If *faith* be the *gift of the God* of GRACE to us, as *sight* “is the *gift of the God* of NATURE, according to your assertion, p. “230; does it not follow, that as we may see when we will, so we “may believe in Christ—believe the forgiveness of our sins; and, “by that means, fill ourselves with *peace and joy in the Holy Ghost* “when we have a mind? But is not this contrary to experience? “Do not the best Christians remember a time, when they could no “more believe than they could make a world, though they prayed “for *faith* with all the ardour they were capable of?”

ANS. 1. You still seem to take it for granted, that there is no true faith, but an explicit *faith* IN CHRIST; and no explicit faith in Christ, but the *faith of full assurance*. But I hope, that I have already proved the contrary in my answer to the Vth objection, p. 295. There are two extremes in the doctrine of faith which should be carefully avoided by every Christian: the one is that of the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, who thinks, that an adulterous murderer may

have true saving faith in the height of his complicated crimes : and the other in that of those who assert, there is no saving faith but that which actually cleanses us from all inbred sin, and opens a present heaven in our breasts. The middle path of truth lies exactly between those opposite mistakes, and that path I endeavour to point out.

As, on the one hand, it never came into my mind, that an impenitent murderer can have even the saving faith of a heathen : so on the other hand, it never entered my thoughts, that a penitent can believe with the faith of full assurance when he will ; for *this* faith depends not only upon our general belief of the truth revealed to us, but also upon a peculiar* operation of God, or revelation of his powerful arm. It

* Mr. Wesley exactly describes *this* faith in his sermon on *Scriptural Christianity*, of which you have here an extract. "By *THIS* faith of the operation of God, which was the "very substance or subsistence of things hoped for, the demonstrative evidence of invisible things," he, (the penitent pricked to the heart, and expecting the promise of the Father) "instantly received the Spirit of adoption, whereby he now cried *Abba, Father!* Now "first it was that he could call *Jesus Lord* by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit itself bearing witness with his spirit that he was a child of God. Now it was that he could truly say, "I live not, but Christ liveth in me, &c.—His soul magnified the Lord, and his Spirit rejoiced in God his Saviour. He rejoiced in him with joy unspeakable, who had reconciled him to God, even the Father : in whom he had redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. He rejoiced in that witness of God's Spirit with his spirit, that he "was a child of God : and more abundantly in the hope of the glory of God, &c. The love "of God was also shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, which was given to him. "Because he was a son, God had sent forth the Spirit of his Son, crying *Abba, Father!* "And that filial love of God was continually increased by the witness he had in himself, of "God's pardoning love to him, &c. so that God was the desire of his eyes, and the joy of "his heart; his portion in time and eternity, &c. He that thus loved God, could not but "love his brother also, &c. This lover of God embraced all mankind for his sake, &c. "not excepting the evil, and unthankful, and least of all, his enemies, &c. These had a "peculiar place both in his heart and his prayers. He loved them *even as Christ loved us*, " &c. By the same almighty love was he saved, both from passion and pride, from lust "and vanity, from ambition and covetousness, and from every temper which was not in "Christ, &c. He spake evil of no man ; nor did an unkind word ever come out of his lips, " &c. He daily grew in grace, increasing in strength, in the knowledge and love of God, " &c. He visited and assisted them that were sick or in prison, &c. He gave all his "goods to feed the poor. He rejoiced to labour or suffer for them ; and whereinsoever "he might profit another, there especially to deny himself.—Such was *Christianity* in its "rise," [i. e. Christianity contradistinguished from the dispensation called the baptism of John.] "Such was a *Christian* in ancient days," [i. e. a Christian contradistinguished from a disciple of John or of Christ before the dispensation of the Holy Ghost took place.] Such was every one of "those, who, when they heard the threatenings of the chief priests "and elders, lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and were all filled with the Holy "Ghost."

I here set my seal to this scriptural description of spiritual Christianity; being fully persuaded of two things: 1. That till a man be thus born of the Spirit, he cannot see the Christian kingdom of God: he cannot be under that glorious dispensation of divine grace, which Christ and the apostles spake of, when they preached, *Repent, and believe the Gos-*

is always attended with ■ *manifestation of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God*: and such a manifestation, God in general grants to none but them, that groan deeply under the *spirit of bondage unto fear*, as Paul did while he remained blind at Damascus;—or them that are peculiarly faithful to the grace of their inferior dispensation, and pray as earnestly for power from on high, as the apostles did after our Lord's ascension.

Therefore, from my asserting, p. 233, that “*So long as the day of salvation continue, all sinners who have not yet finally hardened themselves, may, day and night, [through the help and power of the general light of Christ's GRACE mentioned John i. 9. and Tit. ii. 11.] receive some truth belonging to the everlasting Gospel,*” which takes in the dispensation of THE HEATHENS; from my asserting this, I say, you have no reason to infer that I maintain, any man may, day and night, believe the forgiveness of his sins, and the deep truths of the Gospel of CHRIST; especially since I mentioned immediately what truth it is, which all may believe, if they improve their talent, namely this: “*There is a God, who will call us to an account for our sins, and who spares us to break them off by repentance.*”

2. It would be absurd to suppose, that you can believe with the *luminous faith of assurance*, when God is casting your soul into the dark prison of your own guilt, to bring down your Pharisaic looks, and make you feel the chains of your sins. But even then, may you not believe that God is just, holy, and patient? May you not acknowledge, that you deserve your spiritual imprisonment far more than Joseph's brethren deserved to be *put altogether into ward three days* by their loving, forgiving brother? May you not believe that, although *heaviness may endure for a night*, yet *joy cometh in the morning*? And when you have humbly groaned with David, *I am so fast in prison that I cannot get forth*; may you not pray in faith, *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: Let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice: Give me the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: Convince me as powerfully of righteousness, as thou hast of sin*: And let thy Spirit, which now acts upon me as a *spirit of bondage unto fear*, begin to act as a *spirit of adoption, and liberty*; of *righteousness, peace, and joy*?—May you not even add, “*O God, I believe thy promise concerning the coming of the Com-*

pel, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 2. That whosoever has not in his breast the above described kingdom, i. e. *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*; and does not bring forth its excellent fruits in his life, either never was a *spiritual* Christian, or is fallen back from the *ministration of the Spirit* into the *dispensation of the letter*, or the bare form of godliness, if not into open wickedness. See the next note.

“ *forter ; help thou my unbelief, and grant me such a faith as thou*
 “ *wilt vouchsafe to seal with that holy Spirit of promise. Thou shakest*
 “ *before me the rod of infernal vengeance : I deserve it a thousand*
 “ *times ; but, O Father of mercies, O my Father, if, for the sake of*
 “ *thine only-begotten Son, thou wilt yet permit such a wretch as I*
 “ *am to call thee Father, give me the spirit of adoption ; and witness*
 “ *to my spirit that I am a child of thine. But if thou wilt still hide*
 “ *thy face from me, never suffer me to entertain one dishonourable*
 “ *thought of thee ; never let me think thee a Moloch. Though thy*
 “ *justice slay me, let me still trust in thee, and believe, that for*
 “ *Christ’s sake thy mercy will revive my soul ?*” Is it scriptural to
 rank among absolute unbelievers a penitent who thus humbly and
 obediently waits for the faith of full assurance—the faith of Chris-
 tianity in its state of perfection ? If our Lord pronounces such
 mourners *blessed*, does it become us to pronounce them *accursed* ?
 but I return to your objection.

3. The latter part of it confirms, instead of overturning my doc-
 trine ; it being evident, that if the persons you speak of, *prayed with*
ardour for the faith of assurance, they had already *some degree of*
faith: for praying is *calling upon the Lord*, and St. Paul speaks the
 words of soberness, where he says, *How shall they CALL on him in*
whom they have not BELIEVED ?

4. I am so far from thinking our power to believe is *absolute*, that
 I have asserted, p. 233, *it is impossible heartily to believe the truths*
which do not suit our present state :—And p. 245, 246, &c. I have
 observed, that we *savingly believe the “ truth suitable to our present*
“ circumstances, WHEN it is kindly presented by FREE GRACE, and affec-
“ tionately embraced by PREVENTED free will ;” adding that, when we
 believe, our *“ faith is more or less operative,”* not only *“ according*
“ to the EARNESTNESS with which we welcome the truth to our inmost
“ souls ;” but also, *“ according to the POWER with which the Spirit of*
“ grace impresses it upon our hearts.”—Nay, I have ascribed so much
 to the power of the free grace, by which saving faith is *“ instantly*
formed,” as to insinuate that sometimes (as at St. Paul’s conversion)
 this power for awhile bears all down before it. This at least was
 my meaning, when I said, Section 1st. *“ We may IN GENERAL suspend*
the act of faith, ESPECIALLY when the glaring light” (i. e. the luminous
 power) *“ that sometimes accompanies the revelation of truth, is abated.”*
 Consider the force of the words, *“ in general,”* and *“ especially ;”*
 advert to the exceptions for which they make room ; and you will
 see, I allow, that free grace, AT TIMES, acts with *almost as much*
irresistibility as some moderate Calvinists contend for.

5. With respect to my comparison between our power to *believe*, and our power to *see*, far from showing that all men may at any time believe the Gospel of CHRIST, it intimates, nay, it proves the very reverse. Can you see *when* you will, and *what* you will? Can you see in a dark night without a light? Can you see in a bright day, when a thick vail covers your face? Can you see, if you place an opaque body full in your light? Can you see what is out of the reach of your eyes? Can you see the *rising* sun, when you look full *west*, or the stars when you pore upon a dunghill? Can you see when you obstinately shut your eyes? Or when you have let a wicked man put them out, lest you should not live in idleness? Apply to *faith* these queries about *sight*; recollect the preceding observations, and you will perceive, 1. That our power to believe is various ways *circumscribed*; it being impossible, that he who has but one talent, perhaps unimproved, should carry on as extensive a trade, as the man who diligently improves his five or ten talents: 2. That nevertheless, supposing we have still a ray of the light of truth, and have not yet been given up to judicial blindness, or to final hardness, we may, day and night (if we do not still bury our talent) believe, by the above-mentioned helps, *some obvious* truth belonging to the *lowest* dispensation of divine grace, and *begin* to follow our Lord's direction: *While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of the light*: And, 3. That if we oppose this doctrine, we begin to follow our Calvinist brethren into *Crispianity*; and are just ready to bow at the shrine of the *great Diana* of the day, and to kiss her iron-clay feet, *Finished Salvation* and *Finished Damnation*.

OBJ. VII. "Your doctrine concerning the school of Faith, and its "several forms—concerning the temple of Faith, and its capital partitions, is entirely founded upon the doctrine of the dispensations of divine grace; a doctrine this, which many people will rank with "what they call *The novel Chimeras of your Checks*."

I hope that I have proved what I have advanced concerning the dispensations, by arguments founded upon Scripture, Reason, and Conscience. However, that the idea of *novelty* may not stand in the way of any of my readers, out of fifty authors, whom I may quote in support of this important doctrine, I shall produce two, a Calvinist and an Anti-calvinist; not doubting but their consentaneous testimony will sufficiently break the force of your objection. The first is the Rev. Mr. Green, late curate of Thurnscoe in Yorkshire, and once an assistant to Mr. Whitefield. In his book, called *Grace and Truth vindicated*, p. 116, you will find the following just remarks:

“ It appears to me from *Scripture*, as well as *Experience*, that there are divers dispensations, but the same spirit: *The kingdom of heaven consists of various degrees, and different mansions*. This is true, whether by the kingdom of heaven we understand the outward professors of religion and their privileges, the inward kingdom of grace, or the kingdom of glory: (in all which senses the words in *Scripture* are frequently used.)—As face answers to face in a glass, so do these respectively answer each other. Thus the outward privileges of religion from Adam to Moses were *least*; from Moses to Christ *greater*, and from Christ to the restitution of all things, *greatest*.—Again, to be a spiritual or *enlightened* HEATHEN, as Socrates, Plato, or Cornelius, before he heard Peter, is one degree or dispensation of grace. To be a spiritual or *enlightened* JEW; and with Peter and the other disciples before the day of pentecost, to believe and acknowledge, that Jesus is the Messiah, though not *spiritually* come, is a greater. But to be a *spiritual* CHRISTIAN, to have Christ, the exalted God-man, revealed in us from heaven, and to be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise unto the day of the redemption of this vile body, is the last and most perfect dispensation of grace. He that is feeble here, shall be as David, and he that is strong, &c. shall be, &c. as the angel of the Lord, &c. For it may be observed, that every dispensation admits of a growth therein; and moreover, that each of them is in some sort and degree experienced by a spiritual Christian,” &c.

My second witness is the Rev. Mr. J. Wesley, who even in his first sermon on *Salvation by faith*, preached near forty years ago, clearly distinguishes Christian faith, properly so called, or *faith in Christ glorified*, not only from the faith of a heathen, but also from the faith of initial Christianity, i. e. “ *the faith which the apostles had while our Lord was upon earth*.”

“ And first,” says he, “ it,” *the faith that saves us into the great salvation described in the second part of the sermon*, “ is not barely the faith of a heathen. Now God requires of a heathen to believe, *That God is, that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, &c. by glorifying him as God, &c.* and by a careful practice of moral virtue, &c. A Greek or Roman, therefore, yea, a Scythian or Indian, was without excuse, if he did not believe thus much;—The being and attributes of God, a future state of reward and punishment, &c. For this is barely *the faith of a heathen*.”—Soon after he adds: “ And herein does it (*this faith in Christ glorified*) differ from that faith, which the apostles themselves had while our Lord was

“ upon earth, that it acknowledges the necessity and merit of his death, and the power of his resurrection.”

The doctrine of *Christian* perfection is entirely founded on the privileges of the *Christian* dispensation in its fulness : privileges these, which far exceed those of the Jewish economy, and the baptism of John. Accordingly Mr. Wesley, in his sermons on *Christian Perfection*, makes the following just and scriptural distinction between those dispensations. “ It may be granted, 1. That David, in the general course of his life, was one of the holiest men among the Jews. And, 2. That the holiest men among the Jews did sometimes commit sin. But if you would hence infer that all Christians do, and must commit sin, as long as they live ; this consequence we utterly deny. It will never follow from those premises. Those who argue thus, seem never to have considered that declaration of our Lord, Matt. xi. 11. *Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist. Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.* I fear indeed, there are some, who have imagined the kingdom of heaven here to mean the kingdom of glory : as if the Son of God had just discovered to us, that the least glorified saint in heaven is greater than any man upon earth. To mention this is sufficiently to refute it. There can, therefore, no doubt be made, but the kingdom of heaven, here, (as in the following verse, where it is said to be taken by force) or the kingdom of God, as St. Luke expresses it, is that kingdom of God on earth, whereunto all true believers in Christ, all real Christians, belong. In these words then our Lord declares two things. 1. That before his coming in the flesh, among all the children of men, there had not been one greater than John the Baptist : whence it evidently follows, that neither Abraham, David, nor any Jew, was greater than John. 2. That he who is least in the kingdom of God (in that kingdom which he came to set up on earth, and which the violent now began to take by force) is greater than he. Not a greater prophet (as some have interpreted the word) for this is palpably false in fact : but greater in the grace of God, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we cannot measure the privileges of real Christians by those formerly given to the Jews. Their ministration (or dispensation) we allow *was* glorious ; but ours exceeds in glory. So that whosoever would bring down the Christian dispensation to the Jewish standard, &c. doth greatly err, neither knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.”—From these excellent quotations therefore,

it appears that you do me an honour altogether undeserved, if you suppose that I first set forth the doctrine of the dispensations.

OBJ. VIII. "I cannot help thinking, that the doctrine of a faith proper to all those dispensations is above the capacity of plain Christians, and should never be mentioned, lest it should puzzle, instead of edifying the Church."

If your fears be well grounded, even the apostles' creed is above the capacity of plain Christians: for that creed, the simplest of all those which the primitive church has handed down to us, evidently distinguishes three degrees of faith: 1. *Faith in God the Father Almighty, who made heaven and earth*, which is the faith of the heathens: 2. *Faith in the Messiah, or in Jesus Christ his only-begotten Son our Lord*; which is the faith of pious Jews, of John's disciples, and of imperfect Christians, who, like the apostles before the day of pentecost, are yet strangers to the * great outpouring of the Spirit: and

* I beg the reader will not mistake me. When I say that pious Jews, and our Lord's disciples before the day of pentecost, were strangers to the *great outpouring* of the Spirit, I do not mean that they were strangers to his directing, sanctifying, and enlivening influences, according to their dispensation. For David had prayed, *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me*: John the Baptist had been visited by his exhilarating power, even in his mother's womb. Our Lord had *breathed upon his disciples, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*; and had imparted him to them as a *Spirit of grace and supplication*, to help them to wait in faith and unceasing prayer, *till they were endued with power from on high*. Besides, they had called him LORD in truth; and no man can do this, but by the *Spirit of faith*, which helps our unbelief and infirmities under all the divine dispensations. Nevertheless they were not fully baptized. The Comforter, that visited them, did not properly dwell in them. Although they had already wrought miracles by his power, the *promise of the Father* was not yet fulfilled to them. They had not yet been *made perfect in one*, by the assimilating power of the heavenly fire. They would have been puzzled by such questions as these: *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?* Acts xix. 2.—*Is he fallen upon you?* Acts x. 44.—*Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost given unto you?* Rom. v. 5.—*Is the fountain springing up into everlasting life opened in your breast?* John iv. 14.—*After that ye believed, were ye sealed with that holy Spirit of promise?* Eph. i. 13.—That *Spirit*, which forms those *rivers of living water*, that *flow out of the belly*, the inmost soul of believers?—That *Spirit* which was not given before Christ was glorified? John vii. 39.—That *Comforter*, which it is more expedient for us to receive, than even to have Christ's bodily presence and constant instructions? John xvi. 7.—If these, and the like questions, would have perplexed the apostles before Christ had opened his spiritual baptism, and set up his kingdom *with power* in their hearts; we ought not to be surprised that professors, who know only the baptism of John, should ingenuously confess, they never heard there was a Holy Ghost [to be received] since they believed, Acts xix. 2. Nor should we wonder if devout Jews, and easy Laodiceans, should even mock and say, You would have us to be filled with new wine: but we are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. The water of our old cisterns is preferable to the new wine of your enthusiastic doctrine, and our baptismal ponds to your baptismal flames.

This, however, was not Mr. Whitefield's language when he admitted an adult person to baptism: (and he knowingly admitted none but believers.) He knew then how to pray for

3. *Faith in the Holy Ghost*—Faith of the operation of God, by which Christians complete in Christ believe according to the working of God's almighty power, and are filled with righteousness, peace, and joy in thus believing.

And here honesty obliges me to lay before the public an objection, which I have had for some time against the appendages of the Athanasian Creed. I admire the scriptural manner in which it sets forth the divine Unity in Trinity, and the divine Trinity in Unity: but I can no longer indiscriminately use its damnatory clauses. It abruptly takes us to the very top of the *Christian* dispensation (considered in a doctrinal light.) This dispensation it calls the *Catholic Faith*: and, without mentioning the faith of the inferior dispensations, as our other Creeds do, it makes us declare, that, “except ‘EVERY ONE’ keep that faith (the faith of the highest dispensation) whole and undefiled—he cannot be saved:—without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.” This dreadful denunciation is true with regard to proud, ungodly infidels, who, in the midst of all the means of *Christian* faith, obstinately, maliciously, and finally set their hearts against the doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; equally despising the Son's atonement, and the Spirit's inspiration. But I will no more invade Christ's tribunal, and pronounce, that the fearful punishment of damnation shall “without doubt” be inflicted upon “every” Unitarian, Arian, Jew, Turk, and Heathen, *that fears God and works righteousness*, though he does not hold the faith of the Athanasian Creed whole. For, if you except the last article, thousands, yea millions, are never called to hold it AT ALL; and therefore shall never perish for not holding it WHOLE. See the notes, p. 145, and 261. At all hazards then, I hope I shall never use again those dam-

the *Promise of the Father*, and how to point the *disciple of John* to the perfection of Christ's dispensation. As a proof of it, take part of the truly Christian hymn which he sung on that occasion:

ANOINT with HOLY FIRE,
BAPTIZE with PURGING FLAMES
This soul, and with thy grace inspire
In CEASELESS, LIVING STREAMS.

Thy HEAVENLY UNCTION give,
THY PROMISE, Lord, fulfil,
‘Give Power [i. e. faith] THY SPIRIT TO RECEIVE,’
And STRENGTH to do thy will.

This good old Gospel is far more clearly set forth in Mr. Wesley's sermon, called *Scriptural Christianity*, and in his *Hymns for Whitsunday*, which I earnestly recommend, as pointing out the one thing needful for all carnal professors.

natory clauses, without taking the liberty of guarding them agreeably to the doctrine of the dispensations. And if Zelotes presses me with my Subscriptions, I reply beforehand, that the same Church, which required me to subscribe to St. Athanasius's Creed, enjoins me also to believe this clause of St. Peter's Creed, *In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him*: and if those two creeds are irreconcilable, I think it more reasonable, that Athanasius should bow to Peter, warmed by the Spirit of love; than that Peter should bow to Athanasius, heated by controversial opposition.

To return: That the distinction of the three degrees of saving faith, omitted in the Athanasian Creed, but expressed in the Apostles' Creed, and in the Nicene Creed;—That this distinction, I say, is neither chimerical nor enthusiastical, may be proved by a variety of arguments, two or three of which, I hope, will not intrude too long upon the reader's patience.

1. The first is taken from the doctrine expressly laid down in the New Testament. To what I have said on this head, p. 289, &c. I add here what Christ said to his disciples, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*. Here the most prejudiced may see, that faith in the FATHER is clearly contradistinguished from faith in the SON. As for faith in the HOLY GHOST, see in what manner our blessed Lord sowed the seed of it in the hearts of his disciples. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, he shall testify of me.—It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you.—Behold, I send THE PROMISE OF MY FATHER upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high*. Nor was this great promise made to the apostles alone; for, *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If ANY MAN (not if an apostle) thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believed on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; (his dispensation, which is the highest of all, was not yet opened) because that Jesus was not yet glorified*. And the opening of this dispensation in our hearts requires on our part, not only faith in Christ, but a peculiar faith in the promise of the Father; a promise this, which has the Holy Ghost for its great object.

2. My second argument is taken from the experiences of those who, by the Holy Ghost, were made partakers of Christ glorified,

either on the day of pentecost, or after it; and could feelingly confess Christ dying *for us*, and Christ living *in us*, the hope of glory. Acts ii. 5. we read of *devout men out of every nation under heaven*, who were come to worship at Jerusalem. But how could they have been *devout men*, if they had not *believed in God*? What could have brought them from the ends of the earth to keep a feast to the Lord, if they had been mere Atheists? And yet it is evident, that, through prejudice many of them rejected our Lord; putting him to open shame and a bloody death: but when Peter preached Christ on the day of pentecost, they at first believed on him with a *true*, though not with a *luminous* faith. This appears from the anguish which they felt upon being charged with having *slain the Prince of life*. No man in his senses can be *pricked to the heart* merely for having had a hand in the just punishment of an impostor and a blasphemer, who *makes himself equal with God*. If therefore keen remorse pierced the hearts of those penitent Jews, it is evident, that they looked no more upon Christ as an *impostor*, but already believed in him as the *true Messiah*.

No sooner had they thus passed from faith in the Father to an explicit faith in the Son, but they cried out, *What shall we do?* And Peter directed them to make by baptism an open, solemn profession of their faith in Christ, and to believe the great promise concerning the Holy Ghost. *The promise is unto you*, said he: *Be baptized, EVERY ONE OF YOU, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins: and ye (every one of you) shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* And upon their *gladly receiving the word*; i. e. upon their heartily believing the *gladdening* promise relating to pardon and to the Comforter; and, no doubt, upon their fervently praying that it might be fulfilled in them; *they were all filled with the Spirit*: all their hearts overflowed with *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*.

St. Peter, speaking (Acts xi.) of a similar outpouring of the Spirit, says, *The Holy Ghost fell on them (Gentiles) as on us (Jews) at the beginning.* Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, them that entered his dispensation, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, when you shall enter the full dispensation of my Spirit:—God, adds Peter, gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.—And when the apostles heard these things they glorified God; not indeed by shouting, “Then hath God given the Gentiles power to speak Arabic;” but by saying, *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life*, according to the fulness of the Christian dispensation.

That this dispensation of the Holy Ghost, this *coming of Christ's spiritual kingdom with power*, is attended with an uncommon degree of sanctifying grace, is acknowledged by all: and that the gift of tongues, &c. which at first, on *some occasions*, and in *some persons*, accompanied the baptism of the Spirit, for a sign to bigoted Jews, or to stupid Heathens;—that such a gift, I say, was a *temporary appendage*, and by no means an *essential part* of Christ's spiritual baptism, is evident from the merely spiritual effect, which the receiving of the Holy Ghost had upon the penitent Jews, who, being *born of water and the Spirit*, pressed after the apostles into the kingdom on the day of pentecost.

“Even in the infancy of the church,” (says an eminent Divine) “God divided those (*miraculous*) gifts with a sparing hand. Were all even then prophets? Were all workers of miracles? Had all the gifts of healing? Did all speak with tongues? No, in nowise. Perhaps not one in a thousand. Probably none but the teachers of the church, and only some of them. It was therefore for a more excellent purpose than this, that they (the brethren and apostles) were all filled with the Holy Ghost. It was to give them (what none can deny to be essential to all Christians in all ages) the mind which was in Christ, those holy fruits of the Spirit, which, whosoever has not, is none of his: to fill them with love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.”

It is very remarkable, that although 3000 converts received the gift of the Holy Ghost on the memorable day in which Christ opened the dispensation of his Spirit, no mention is made of so much as one of them working a single miracle, or speaking with one new tongue. But the greatest, and most beneficial of miracles was wrought upon them all: For, *All that believed*, says St. Luke, *were together: continuing daily with one accord in the temple, breaking bread from house to house, eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people, by their humble, affectionate, angelical behaviour.* Or, as the same historian expresses it, Acts iv. 32. *The multitude of them that believed—spoke Greek and Latin? No, but—were of ONE heart, and of ONE soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but that they had all things common; having been made perfect in one, agreeably to our Lord's deep prayer, recorded by St. John: Neither pray I for these (my disciples) alone, but for THEM also, who shall believe on me through their word, That they may be ONE:—I in them, by my Spirit, and thou in me, that they may be made PERFECT IN ONE.*

3. To this argument, taken from the *experiences* of the primitive Christians, I may add, that the doctrine of the dispensations is indirectly taught by our Church even to children in her catechism, where she instructs them to say : “ *By the articles of my belief I learn, FIRST, to believe in God the Father, who made me, &c. SECONDLY, in God the Son, who redeemed me, &c. And, THIRDLY, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me :* for these three distinctions are expressive of the three grand degrees of the faith, *whereby we inherit ALL the promises of God, and are made partakers of the divine nature :* they are not descriptive of faith in three Gods, but of the capital manifestations of the Triune God, in whose name we are baptized ; and of the three great dispensations of the everlasting Gospel, namely, that of the *Heathens*, that of the *Jews*, and that of *spiritual Christians* ; the dispensation of Abraham being only a link between Heathenism and Judaism ; and the dispensation of John the Baptist, or of Christianity begun, being only a transition between Judaism and Christianity perfected.

Our Church catechism brings to my remembrance the office of confirmation ; it was, it seems, originally intended to lead young believers to the fulness of the Christian dispensation, agreeably to what we read, Acts viii. 12, &c. Peter and John went from Jerusalem to Samaria to lay their hands on the believers who had not yet been baptized with the Holy Ghost, and to *pray that they might receive him : For as yet he was fallen upon none of them : only they were baptized by Philip in the name of the Lord Jesus.—When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth ?* I fear, but little of the faith peculiar to his *full* dispensation. Most professors seem satisfied with John’s baptism : or Philip’s baptism. The Lord raise us apostolic Pastors to pray in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power : “ *Strengthen thy servants, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter ; and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace ; the spirit of wisdom and understanding ; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength ; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness ; and fill them with the spirit of thy holy fear now and for ever.*” *Order of Confirmation.* Can it be said that those, in whom that prayer is not now answered, live under the dispensation of Christianity perfected ? Are they either established Christians, or spiritual churchmen ? How long shall the mystery of iniquity prevail ! How long shall a *Pharisaic Deistical* world destroy the faith of the Son, under colour of contending for faith in the FATHER ! And how long shall a world of Antinomian Solifidian professors destroy faith in the *Holy Ghost*, under pretence of recommending faith in the Son ! O Lord,

exert thy power : *Pour out of thy Spirit upon all flesh*, and give wisdom to all thy ministers to divide the word of truth aright, and to feed thy people according to their states and thy dispensations !

If these answers give my objector no satisfaction, and he still think it his duty to attack my Essay, I beg leave to address him in the words of a judicious divine of the last century. “ I shall not need
“ (I presume) to desire you, that in your answer you will not rise
“ up in your might against the weaker, looser, or less considerate
“ passages or expressions (of which kind you may very possibly
“ meet more than enow :) but that you will rather bend the *strength*
“ of your reply against the *strength* of what you shall oppose. You
“ well know that a field may be won, though many soldiers of the
“ conquering side should fall in the battle : and that a tree may
“ flourish and retain both its beauty and firmness of standing in the
“ earth, though many of the smaller twigs and lesser branches should
“ prove dry, and so be easily broken off. So may a mountain remain
“ unmoved, yea immoveable, though many handfuls of the lighter
“ and looser earth about the sides of it should be taken up and scat-
“ tered into the air like dust. In like manner, the body of a discourse
“ may stand entire in its solidity, weight, and strength, though many
“ particular expressions, sayings, and reasonings therein, that are
“ more remote from the centre, should be detected either of incon-
“ siderateness, weakness, or untruth.”



BT1330 .F55 1820 / vol 2
Fletcher, John, 1729-1785.
Checks to Antinomianism.

BT
1330
F55
1820
v.2

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

228859

